CHAPTER 8

'Child embeddedness' is a richer and more sophisticated concept than the term 'child-centredness'. (Fleer, 2003, p. 66)

NIMA'S FAMILY

Home

Figure 8.1 Nado's place

Figure 8.2 Nima's house

Nado's place (Figure 8.1) is a name that most people living in Khangkhu village call the three different sized houses on an acre of land, just above the main highway and about a hundred metres from the Khangkhu Middle Secondary School (KMSS). Nado, the property owner, lived in the small makeshift house (Figure 8.2) at the edge of the land, while he constructed the four storey apartment building and the two ground floor apartments next to it. One of the two ground floor apartments is a grocery shop and the other is a canteen where school children come to buy snacks and cold drinks. The four-storey building has eight apartments, mostly occupied by teachers from the KMSS. The initial idea was to dismantle the makeshift house once the other structures were complete. However, as the demand for housing grew, the owner had no problems in getting someone to live there permanently. From 2009 this makeshift house became home for Nima and her family. The front side of the house is built with mud bricks and the back is made with wooden planks, which does not guarantee much warmth inside the house unless you have a *bukari*. Their house has two bedrooms, a small lounge or *bukari* room, a kitchen and a bathroom. One of the bedrooms has a single bed in one corner and an altar in another. The children and any guests of the house, who generally sleep on the floor, use this room. The other bedroom is Nima's parents' bedroom which has a queen size bed, a dressing mirror, a glass-fronted cabinet filled with clothes, a loom and a 24 inch television in one corner.

The lounge has a single bed in one corner on which their grandmother sleeps. It also serves as

Figure 8.3 The *bukari* room

Figure 8.4 The kitchen and toilet

the meal room where all meals are eaten, either sitting on the floor or on low wooden stools around the *bukari*. The kitchen and the toilet (Figure 8.4) are next to each other in a row. The house has one extra room, which the owner had rented to a couple of trainee teachers from the Paro College of Education for a monthly rent of Nu.1000 (Au$ 20). Nima's family pays Nu.3000 every month.

Figure 8.5 Washing clothes

Figure 8.6 Sharing the water pipe

Figure 8.5 shows the plinth area of the apartment building, next to Nima's house, which is used by everyone to do their laundry. As can be seen in Figure 8.6, there is a tap outside the building, to which a long pipe is attached, so that it can be dragged to wherever there is sunshine. Right in front of the houses is a small open space that serves as the car park, play area for the children, sleeping area for the dogs, clothesline space and basking and chatting place for everyone in the campus. For the small community at *Nado's place,* this is a great venue for socializing. They talk, drink and eat while washing their cars, clothes and children or just merely sitting and watching the others. Nima's *bukari* room too is a popular haunt for

the occupants of the building. As they wash their clothes in the chilled water of winter months, every now and then they run inside the *bukari* room to warm their red, wet hands.

Figure 8.7 The kitchen garden

Figure 8.8 Planting potatoes

At the back of the house, the family has a small kitchen garden (Figure 8.7) where they grow most of their vegetables, such as cabbages, beans, asparagus, carrots and chillies. Even in winter they have some leeks, onions, garlic and other green vegetables growing in their backyard. A popular staple for the family is potato, which they plant in March. Nima's mother and her sisters spread bags of chicken manure on the garden (Figure 8.8), which I am told is good for growing potatoes. Just next to the kitchen garden there is a huge heap of scrap materials: bottles, tins, plastics, paper boxes and cardboard that the family collects to sell to re-cyclers in India.

Nima's family consider themselves very lucky to have this house, her mother says, "It has 24 hour water and is very close to the school. The Indian Military medical facilities are quite close too". Moreover, she has her sister's family living and working about a hundred metres away, below her house on a poultry farm. Her only fear she says is "When might the house owner raise the rent again and by how much?"

The Parents

Nima's father Sonam and mother Yangzom are originally from a village called Chedungkhar in Samdrupdzongkhar district in the south east of Bhutan. Sonam came from a family of fourteen children and Yangzom was the youngest of a family of eight children. The language of communication at home is *Sherchogpakha*, one of the 21 dialects in Bhutan. Sonam and his wife were farmers and never went to school, for the nearest school to their village was about a 6 hours walk from their house. They married very young and life in the village was very tough for the young couple. To make ends meet, Sonam had to take up all sorts of work

available in the village: as a carpenter, mason, wood cutter and field worker, while his wife looked after the parents, grazed the cows and worked in the fields. The addition of a daughter and two sons over the years made life even more difficult for the two. Just like many others before him, he wanted to move out of the village and make a better living somewhere else. With the little money that the family had put aside for such a day, he finally travelled to Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan. Very soon, Sonam learnt that life in Thimphu was not as easy as he thought, especially for someone with no education and with no place to live. Once more he had to do all kinds of odd jobs. He tried selling garments from door-to-door, without success, so he then worked as an apprentice to a truck driver. After some months he learnt how to drive and he drove a truck for a couple of years. Then finally in 2001 he moved to Paro where he worked as a taxi driver until he managed to get a loan to buy his own taxi.

Meanwhile his wife and children were still in the village waiting for him to come back for them. At one stage Yangzom feared that he had abandoned them like some of the other villagers. Yangzom said, “You know, some of the men from the village ventured out like that and never came back. They have settled with a new wife in a new place”. One fine day in 2005, the much-awaited message came to Chedungkhar, summoning Yangzom and her children to Paro. The first thing Yangzom did in Paro was to get her two older children, who were already nine and eight years old into a school. While her husband was away, Yangzom in Chedungkhar could not send her children to school even if she wanted to. She said, “The school was very far away so the children would have had to carry their own supplies and firewood. Someone would have had to stay with them, build a shack, cook and clean”. Thinking of this she considers herself and her family lucky to be in Paro. Right after the two children were enrolled in a school, Yangzom had to return to the village, to look after her sick grandmother. This meant that the daughter, who was only nine years old, had to cook, clean, wash, look after her brother and also go to school every day until her mother returned. The couple have had two more children since coming to Paro, a boy and a girl.

Sonam works very hard for his family, around 7 o’clock in the morning he drives to the taxi rank in Paro town and waits for passengers. He prefers taxiing long distances rather than doing the local rounds in Paro, he says, “Trips to Thimphu and Phuntsholing fetch better money”. Every day, he returns home around 10 o’clock at night. He now earns about Nu. 30000 (Au$550) a month from which he pays a monthly instalment of Nu.4500 for the car loan, Nu. 3000 as house rent, another Nu.1000 as tuition fee for his children, sends some

money to his parents in the village and with the balance meets the other expenses of the house.

During my first visit to Nima's house, I spotted a local bamboo bow in a green cloth case, hanging on the wall of the main bedroom and I wondered who in the house played archery and Nima replied, "My *Apa*". After saying this she jumped from the bed and ran into the next bedroom. She returned with some photographs in a plastic bag. We sat on her parents' bed and went through her photographs. Nima's mother and elder sister joined us too. Most of the photographs were of Sonam receiving prizes during archery and *kuru* matches.

Figure 8.9 Viewing the prize

Figure 8.10 Other prizes

Nima's sister picked up a photograph showing the whole family looking at a new 32-inch television set in a box (Figure 8.9). She happily explained that it was the prize for the highest target hit during a *kuru* match that her father participated in. Nima held my hand and led me to the altar-cum-bedroom where she pointed at the new television set. We returned to the bed and her mother showed me another photograph of her husband's team receiving microwaves (Figure 8.10) as the winner's prize in an archery match in Thimphu. I asked her whether she was using it and she replied, "No, my children will use it when they grow up. I do not know how to use it". The microwave was neatly stacked on top of a pile of boxes in the altar room. The two daughters and their mother showed me more photographs of Sonam receiving prizes. I picked one up and said, "Here is another television set". Yangzom smiled and replied, "His brother took it. We owed him some money".

As we sifted through some more photographs, someone called Yangzom's name from outside, and she shouted back asking them to come in. Nima got up from the bed and ran out to see who was coming. She came back hand-in-hand with a woman, followed by another woman with a baby on her back. Yangzom invited them to sit on the bed, but they looked hesitantly at me. I swiftly moved to one corner of the bed and amiably invited them to join us. As they sat

on the edge of the bed I controlled myself from a burst of laughter; five of us, sitting on the queen size bed just like the limitless passengers jammed on top of public buses in India. The sun's rays illuminating the room through the clean glass windows and a view of the green kitchen garden outside makes the queen size bed the best spot in the house to sit and chat.

Figure 8.11 Viewing photographs with me

Figure 8.12 A cloth sample

The woman holding Nima's hand gave a plastic bag full of biscuit packets and milk powder to Yangzom saying, "This is for *Abhi* (grandma), how is she?" Yangzom looked at me and explained, "She is my cousin". Each of the ladies picked up some photographs to look at (Figure 8.11); they knew most of the people in the photographs, so they chattered in *Sherchogpakha* and cracked jokes about some of them. Meanwhile, Yangzom went into kitchen to prepare some tea for her guests and Nima took photographs of the baby. Over cups of tea, the women started discussing the half woven piece of cloth on the loom. Yangzom's cousin cut a piece from the sample cloth so that she could weave a similar *gho* for her husband (Figure 8.12). As they were about to leave Yangzom remembered having some *ara* (wine), so she insisted that they drank some before they left. Once more they sat in the *bukari* room and had a few small cups of *ara*. Nima and I continued to look at more photographs. She showed me one of a birthday celebration and she said, "*Ata* (elder brother) Nyenda's birthday". I then asked her when her birthday party was and before she could respond her mother came in and replied, "Now that all children are big and going to school, the expenses are much more so we can't afford birthday parties". We put the photographs back into the plastic bag and joined the guests in the *bukari* room. The guest with the baby asked whether Nima got admission to TMSS and Yangzom nodded her head. The guest could not get her daughter enrolled in a school in Paro although she was the same age as Nima. The admission panel members rated her as 'under-age'. With a slight hesitation Yangzom told them that she got Nima enrolled with the help of the teachers living in the building and she further added

that even her younger son got enrolled last year with their help. Her cousin then said, “Nima is very lucky to get admission into the Khangkhu School when others older than her did not”.

Despite the large family and their financial status, Sonam and Yangzom accepted that their main responsibility was to see their five children through college. Yangzom said, “I do not want them to suffer like we did”. Their only hopes and wishes for their children were, “They should all pass their exams every year”. Yangzom’s face darkened when she said, “My eldest daughter and my two middle sons each failed a year. I hope Nima is smarter”. In the hope of making the children perform better in their studies, the parents paid the two trainee teachers living next door to provide tuition to their children. To meet the cost of tuition, the family cut down on other expenses including food and clothes.

Figure 8.13 Weaving a *gho* piece

Figure 8.14 Preparing the warp for a *kira*

As can be seen from Figures 8.13 and 8.14, Yangzom wove clothes for the family as well as for customers who placed orders, to ease the strain on Sonam’s earnings. Her elder daughter helped her with the weaving and Nima and *Abhi* helped her to roll the thread. Besides weaving, she and her children also collected scrap materials for sale in India. As usual, we sat on her bed one day, talking about all the things that Yangzom did to try and earn some extra money for the family. She stroked Nima’s hair and looked at me gloomily and said, “Madam, I want to do so many things to make money, however, I cannot because I cannot read and write”.

Every afternoon Yangzom spends about an hour in the altar room panting and sweating, trying to complete her 100 prostrations for the day (Figure 8.15). Like many of her friends, she has committed herself to completing 100,000 prostrations, which she assumed may take her three years to finish; so far she has completed one year. She said, “It is good both for religious reasons as well as for health”.

Figure 8.15 Yangzom prostrates in her altar room

The grandparents

Nima's maternal *Abhi,* who is eighty-four years old, is visually impaired and lives with them. She had joined the family a couple of years ago after they found that she could not take care of herself in the village. She can hardly speak a word of *Dzongkha;* therefore unless someone speaks to her in her own language, she does not talk to anyone. Every day after breakfast Nima carries a mat under her arm, holds *Abhi*'s hand and escorts her to the huge prayer wheel that is about fifty metres away from her house. *Abhi* sits on the mat and turns the prayer wheel with one hand while the other works on a string of worn out prayer beads. Sometimes a couple more old people from the neighbourhood join her. Around lunchtime Nima brings *Abhi* back to the house. Then, for the whole evening, *Abhi* sits on her bed in the *bukari* room and continues turning her small hand-prayer-wheel till it is time to sleep.

Figure 8.16 Abhi rolling thread

Figure 8.17 The handmade spinner

Some days, when there is nobody washing clothes outside the building, Yangzom gets *Abhi* to roll thread for her weaving (Figure 8.16). Each time she finishes rolling one skein of wool, she would shout to Nima to bring another. If she is around, Nima would put the skein of wool

around the handmade spinner (Figure 8.17), locate the end of the thread and place it in *Abhi*'s hands and run away to play.

Nima's paternal *Meymey,* who is seventy-six years old, joined the family in the winter of 2011; until then he had lived in the village looking after the house, fields and the cows. Because of constant pain in his legs, Sonam brought him to Paro for treatment, as the basic health unit for their village was too far for him to reach. Nima's elder sister regularly accompanied him to the Indian Military health unit in Khangkhu so that she could translate for him to the Indian doctor.

Nima's two-bedroom house has nine people permanently living in it and more relatives join them occasionally. Talking about the number of people in the house, Yangzom laughed and said, "I have invited my village *Meymey* to come and visit Taktsang[54]". I looked at her amazed and asked, "Where would he sleep?" She laughed and pointed at the wooden floor, "Here", she said. Her daughter commented, "Ma'am I think we need to buy some tents", her mother laughed some more. Despite the crowd, the atmosphere in Nima's house is always of good cheer.

Nima and her siblings

Sonam and Yangzom have two daughters and three sons with ages ranging from 5 to 18 years; Nima is the youngest of them all. The five children assisted their parents and grandparents in all the activities of the house, which I found a very laudable characteristic of this big family in a small space.

Figure 8.18 Wood for the *bukari*

[54] A very holy site in Paro, known as the "tigers' nest"

One very cold morning, I visited the family to find that Sonam and Yangzom had gone to Thimphu with *Abhi* so the house was left in the children's care for the day. Nima and her two middle brothers were in the house. As soon as she saw me she called her brothers and the fourteen year old said, "Ma'am please sit, we will light the *bukari*". So, saying he started to saw a piece of wood. Nima ran outside to get a couple of more logs and the younger son dragged in a sack full of pinecones. Between the three of them they got the *bukari* burning for me (Figure 8.18). I felt very touched seeing these three children harmoniously creating a comfortable and warm atmosphere for a visitor. I asked the children how they manage to get their firewood. The eldest said that they got it from the forest. Nima pointed at a piece of painted wood on the floor and said that they collected them from the school construction site. She looked at my handbag and asked me whether I had brought any more photographs to look at and I instantly replied that I did. So as I took out some of the photographs that they had taken the earlier week, Nima suggested that we sit on *Abhi*'s bed. I kept the photographs on the bed and the first one that Nima picked was of herself with a locally made thread roller (Figure 8.19). She told me that she was learning how to roll thread for weaving like her mother, so that she can weave her own kira when she grows up. I asked her who was teaching her how to do that and she said, "*Ana"* (her elder sister). Next, pointing at the photograph in Figure 8.20, she said that she was learning ABCs from the teacher next door. Her brothers added that they were learning Math and English from them too.

Figure 8.19 Nima trying her mother's thread roller

Figure 8.20 The alphabet charts

Just then her sister came into the room and said, "Ma'am sometime next week we might go to our village in the east for a few days". Nima looked at me and asked, "Can I take the camera?" I answered, "Of course you can, so that I can see your village and you can tell me what you did there". Nima looked pleased as she ran out of the house. Her sister sat next to me on the bed and looked through the photographs. I asked her whether she was excited to go

back to school, as it was almost time for it to start. She told me that she was excited to meet her friends, however not very keen about her studies, as she had already failed twice. She added that her English grammar was very poor. I asked her if she would like some grammar practice books. The next time I visited I took her some grammar practise books with answers. Nima's sister aspires to complete her year 12 and then join teacher training. She said, "Once I get a teaching job, I can take care of my parents as well as my brothers and sister".

Her brother, who was better at schoolwork, wanted to become an engineer; he said, "I want to give my parents a better life". Nima too wanted to become a teacher and help her parents. Wanting to do well in studies so that they can be in a better position to take care of their parents is the usual aspiration of most children in Bhutan. It is a part of our cultural philosophy as well as our upbringing. The fear of not being able to take care of your ageing parents is a painful and disgraceful thing both for the child as well as for the parents. Most Bhutanese believe that "how we treat our parents will determine how our children treat us". Children in general are aware of the sacredness of the relationship between parent and children; it is an important aspect of Buddhism.

Figure 8.21 Nima playing *Cooking*

Figure 8.22 Serving lunch for Pema

Nima loved to play cooking games: she has a box full of plastic containers, bottle tops, lids and other miniature cooking utensils and crockery that she kept at the back of her house (Figure 8.21). Her constant playmate is Pema (Figure 8.22), the boy who lives in the building near her house, whose father is also a taxi driver.

One day I met Nima and Pema playing near her kitchen garden. She was cutting some leeks from the garden with a real kitchen knife; she smiled and said that she was preparing rice and dry fish curry for lunch. I told her that I loved dry fish curry and she said, "Leek is good with dry fish". I asked her whether Pema was helping her cook and she answered that he was making a house. Pema was placing some cardboard papers on top of four twigs that he had

inserted in the ground. Seeing me look at Pema's construction, Nima said, "That's the roof". With a flat twig she stirred the mixture of sand and water in the pot. She took out the small plastic cups and plates and shouted in her mother tongue to Pema to come for lunch. However, Pema insisted that she call him "*Apa*" as he was the father. She told him to wash his hands and eat, as she served the stuff on the plates with a twig. Suddenly she got up excitedly and pointed at the road and said, "Ma'am my brothers are returning from the forest". I looked towards the road and there were some boys pulling logs (Figure 8.23) with ropes wrapped round their shoulders and as they came closer I saw that one of them was her brother.

Figure 8.23 Nima's brothers

Figure 8.24 Chopping *bukari* size wood

With sweat trickling down his forehead, he unwrapped the rope from his shoulder and then with a long whistle, sat on the log and asked Nima to bring him some cold water. She ran into the house and instantly came back with a bottle of water. The other brother came out of the house with a huge knife and started to chop the long logs into short pieces to fit into their *bukari* (Figure 8.24). He continued to chop some more logs collected on the previous days. After he had finished he stacked them up neatly near the house. I looked at the boys with admiration. The youngest son came a little later, he was carrying a few short branches on his back and he too was sweating profusely (Figure 8.25). He took them directly into the *bukari* room.

I thought they might now have lunch or a rest, but I was wrong. After a drink of water the boys picked up their knives and ropes and were on the road once more (Figure 8.26). Nima's mother came out of the house to sit in the sun for some time; she had been weaving the whole morning. She looked lovingly at her sons and said, "They are in charge of keeping the house warm, and they are very helpful".

Figure 8.25 Nyenda's contribution of wood

Figure 8.26 A second trip

A scrap material business

As can be seen in Figure 8.27, Yangzom and her older children collected empty bottles, tins, plastics, paper products, anything that was recyclable, as and when they had time. Nima helped her to stack the bottles at the back of the house and sometimes helped her count them (Figure 8.28). Yangzom was a first timer in the scrap business; therefore she did not know exactly how much money she could get for what she collected down south at the Indian border town of Jaigoan. She did not even know how many bottles she and her children had accumulated over several months at the back of their house. All that she knew was that some profit could be made and that kept her going. Friends and relatives stored scrap materials to give her and she bought some from other people.

Figure 8.27 Packing bottles

Figure 8.28 Stacking bottles

Yangzom's children helped her with the collection of bottles and scrap materials in and around Khangkhu. With sacks in hand they went from house to house collecting material.

One day while looking through some photographs we came across a few showing their scrap collection activities (Figure 8.29).

Figure 8.29 Returning from a bottle collection

One of the boys carries a half sack full of bottles on his back while the other is carrying a whole lot of empty cement bags. Nima's sister and her cousin are carrying a big sack full of bottles between the two of them. Nima's sister found out that some of the bottles that they had paid for had been stolen. Her brother suspected that the children in that locality stole them and exchanged them for sweets in the small shop next to the buildings from where they collected them.

A week later I walked down to their house and found the whole family engaged in carrying the scrap materials from the back of the house to the front of the house, where a blue truck was waiting to be loaded (Figure 8.30).

Figure 8.30 *Meymey* loads the truck

Figure 8.31 Nima helps to load

As can be seen in Figure 8.31, even Nima was busy carrying as many cardboard boxes and tins as she could to the truck. Her mother shouted at her not to walk bare feet near the scrap area, as there might be rusty nails and broken glass. Nima ran into the house and came out wearing her pink wellingtons to resume work. I asked her whether she was going with her mother to sell the collected material. In response she shook her head and then excitedly

added: “she will buy my school bag and uniform with the money”. Finally, Yangzom was ready to take the stuff down to the recyclers in India.

Two days later I walked down to Nima’s house and was surprised to see Yangzom back in the house. I was curious to find out how her first business trip fared. I was especially interested to find out how much profit she made, which I thought would be difficult for her to work out, as she had no records of how much she spent buying the material in the first place. I sat with her on her double bed and we talked about her business trip. She was quite happy with the first trip; she said everything went well; she did not have to go to Jaigoan to look for a buyer as they had come into Bhutan. For the truckload she was paid Nu.25000 (Au$450). Out of this amount, for transportation she paid Nu.2000. She approximated an expenditure of Nu.10 000 for buying them from others and estimated a profit of about Nu.12000, with which, she bought things for her children. I assumed she would start collecting the stuff once more. However, she thought it would be impossible once school started. Cheerfully she said, “Maybe again next winter. It helps me to buy school things for my children”.

A Visit to Chedungkhar

Nima and her family decided to visit their village before the school started, mainly to perform some religious rituals, but also to meet their grandparents and relatives and to be there in case the government started the cadastral survey that was announced on the radio.

It had been three years since the family had been to the village. During the last visit, they managed to buy some corrugated iron sheets for the roof of their village house (Figure 8.32). The sheets were not enough. Half of the house still has wooden shingle for roofing. Nima’s mother hopes that someday she will be able to buy some more iron sheets for the rest of the house.

Figure 8.32 Nima’s House in Chedungkhar

Yangzom and her children did not seem to know the exact date for their trip to the village. They kept on saying that they would have to ask their *Apa*. One day I met Sonam outside their house, washing his taxi. I asked him when exactly they were planning to make the trip to Chedungkhar and he said, "We will try to make it for *Losar* (the New Year)". The family of seven was going to travel in their small five-seater car. They were going to leave *Abhi* with a relative in Thimphu during their absence. On the way they planned to buy supplies and bedding. Nima's sister commented that there won't be much inside the house besides some pots, pans and crockery and her mother added, "The food we took before must be all eaten by rats".

On the 24th of January 2012, early in the morning, the family of five children and two adults crammed themselves and their belongings into their small car and off they went to Phuntsholing which is about five hours drive from Paro. They were going to stop there for lunch and then head east towards Samdrupjongkha, another six hours trip through the Indian plains. In the hustle and bustle of their departure from Paro, they forgot some of their things, including the camera. Nima's sister called me from Gomdhar, apologizing that she had forgotten the camera. However, she comforted me by saying that she could use her mobile phone to take some photographs. That she sounded very concerned about the photographs touched me.

Figure 8.33 Harvesting buckwheat

Figure 8.34 Nima taking a rest

After ten days, the family returned to Paro and I was eager to meet them and hear all their stories. Their grandfather had come back with them, as his health was deteriorating in the village. As promised, they brought back beautiful photographs. All of them looked tired and weak especially Yangzom who was sick for some days during her visit. The whole family worked hard when they were there because it was barley and buckwheat harvesting time (Figure 8.33) and they had to plough the field for planting maize. Nima helped to pluck the

buckwheat heads and stack the stalks. She enjoyed playing with her friends and relatives. Her mother commented, “Sometimes we had to go looking for her as she would have gone with the villagers to their house”. Nima and her sister showed me the photographs of the villagers coming to see them arrive and also seeing them off (Figure 8.35). On both occasions the family was expected to give them money and gifts; they said that it was a part of their culture in the east. Throughout our conversation Nima sat on her mother’s lap and listened. I then asked Yangzom, “Can you not tell the villagers that you do not make as much money as they think you do?” Nima’s sister responded: “They will not believe it. They think all people coming from the urban areas have a lot of money”.

Figure 8.35 Villagers see them off

Figure 8.36 Yangzom offer *ara* to a villager

Nima’s sister remembered having walked for two days from the main road to her village during her previous visit. They had to spend one night on the way. This time she was really happy to see that the road had reached the Gomdhar School. From there they had to walk for only one day. They had to hire horses to carry their luggage up the mountain to Chedungkhar and Nima took a ride on a horse halfway up the mountain. She said, “I was very scared; my mother tied me on the horse back with a shawl”. Through some parts of the journey Nima’s brothers and sister took turns to carry her.

They made it for *Losar* in the village, which they celebrated with *momos* (dumplings). Yangzom kneaded 4 kilograms of wheat flour to make *momos* for eighteen to twenty family members for the *Losar* evening. I wondered how they managed to get the meat for the *momos* as there were no shops in their village. Nima excitedly exclaimed, “The villagers killed a pig for the occasion”, so they had pork *momos*. Obtaining foodstuff in their village was a problem, as they had to walk for several hours to get to the nearest shop. During certain seasons the villagers exchanged food among themselves. Villagers from Kangpara, the next village, brought dried vegetables, which they swapped for maize and buckwheat.

Sonam played archery with the village men and he sponsored the pieces of clothes that they need for the matches as he had lots of them from matches that he had won. The boys played *kuru* with the darts and targets that their *Meymey* prepared for them.

As the family had decided to bring *Meymey* back with them to Paro, they sold all their maize and the cows to the other villagers, which made me think that they must have come back much richer. However, Nima's sister explained that the villagers did not pay; they had agreed to pay her father the next time he visited. They ground most of the buckwheat that they harvested and brought it back to Paro. Yangzom gave a little to all her friends and relatives in Paro and she gave me some too.

Terda – A special ritual

Nima's family are Buddhist and we all believe in the same gods and goddesses. Depending on the region that someone comes from sometimes the deities can differ. For instance I was born in Paro so there are some deities that I strongly believe in and worship. I believe that they are my guardians and protectors. In a similar way Nima's family have particular deities that they believe in and worship. Therefore, the religious ceremonies and rituals that we perform sometimes differ in certain ways and in some cases to perform those rituals people need to travel back to their villages to be close to their deities.

Yangzom and her family were quite worried about the expenses of travelling to their village. I suggested that they could perform their rituals here in Paro, to which Yangzom responded: "We must perform them in the village; otherwise the deities may get annoyed. Moreover, we might not have the right kind of people who know how to perform the particular rituals".

Rituals, prayers and religious ceremonies are performed for many different reasons. For instance, Nima's sister told me that they performed many rituals during their visit to the village. They performed one for *Abhi* because she was sick and then another one for their mother who also became sick when they reached the village. They also performed the fire ritual to chase away any spirits residing in their house. It had been empty for quite a long time as their *Meymey* lived with the cattle at another place. There is a general belief in Bhutan that if a house has been empty for too long, it could be a likely abode for lost spirits. Because of this people need to perform the fire ritual to cleanse the house before they live in it.

A very special ritual that they performed in the village was *Terda* (Figure 8.37), which I believe is quite common in the east, although not so prevalent in other parts of the country.

Figure 8.37 The *Terda*

Figure 8.38 A lay-monk reads prayers for the family

They had performed *Terda* for Yangzom, as she was sick after being in the village for a couple of days. With awe and reverence her daughter said, "Even once before when she was sick the *Terda* healed her, if it wasn't for him she would not be alive today". They call the *Terda* performer *Terda* and all men cannot be *Terdas* for he has to be ordained by a high lama. They believe that by looking at a sick person's face the *Terda* can get a kind of premonition that the person is not going to live for long. He then refuses to perform the ritual. If there is hope he performs the ritual. With confidence in her voice, Yangzom added, "And once he performs the *Terda,* a sick person always recovers".

I had heard about the *Terda* before, so I asked Yangzom whether it was the ritual where a man uses a sword to heal the sick. She laughed and nodded her head. The Terda had six men with him who performed the prayers and made the *torma.* The six men made a huge *torma* representing Yangzom and inside the *torma* they put an egg. I looked at the blurred photograph of the *torma* and said, "Wow, that's a very huge *torma*" and Nima's sister explained that they used about three sacks of maize flour to make the *torma* life size. As the six men chanted the prayers, the *Terda* swirled around the room with a sword in his hand until he finally chopped the *torma* into pieces; the family then quickly picked up the egg, cracked it and looked inside. Nima's sister explained that if there were traces of blood in the yolk, it was not a good sign for the sick person. Yangzom's turned up clean, and she recovered.

Nima's sister had brought some photographs of the ritual. She was very apologetic about them being blurred because of the poor lighting in the house and the phone not having a flash. I told her not to worry about it because their vivid explanations added clarity to the photographs. During certain parts of the ritual, the *Terda* struck the sick with his sword, which intrigued me. I asked, "Does he use the sharp side of the sword?" and to my

astonishment they nodded their heads. I could not hide my expression of fear and Nima looked at my face and laughed. I asked her whether she was scared of the performance. She shook her head and said, “No, it is good chopping”. Out of curiosity I asked Nima’s sister whether they had to pay him for the performance and she said, “We did not, but some others pay for each *Terda* performance about Nu.30000”. Observing the excitement and awe in their voices I commented, “So you believe in this?” Nima’s sister instantly responded, “Yes, ma’am. Some people who were very sick and the hospitals had given up on them, came back to the village and got healed by *Terda*”. She then added that she believed in both medicine and *Terda*. We looked through some more amazing photographs. Nima pointed at *Terda* and said, “Now he will jump from here”. Her sister laughed and added, “He is very tall so when he jumped he hit his head on the beam, but he did not feel it because he was in a trance. He performs the whole ritual standing on his two big toes”. I then commented, “Sounds like a ballet dancer” and both of us laughed. The family reveres *Terda* and considers him a healer.

CHAPTER 9

Questions of education will have been resolved when questions of life will have been solved.

(Vygotsky, 1997, p. 350)

THE SCHOOL

Tsigjab Middle Secondary School (TMSS)

Figure 9.1 The senior block

Figure 9.2 The primary block

Tsigjab Middle Secondary School (TMSS) has classes ranging from PP to X, with a teaching staff of forty, including the principal and three vice-principals. It is a co-ed day school with more than eight hundred students. As can be seen from Figures 9.1 and 9.2, the school has two blocks, the senior block and the primary block. The main block, which is the senior block, consists of a three-storey building housing grade V to X students and three other two-storey buildings containing the science laboratory, the library and the administrative offices. About a hundred metres from the senior block is the primary block consisting of two double storey buildings in which are the classrooms for grades PP to IV. Between the administrative building and the three-storey building is the assembly courtyard, where the children gather every school day at 8.00 a.m. for the morning prayers, followed by the national anthem and then aerobics, all of which takes about forty five minutes.

About 75% of the teachers in TMSS are trained to teach the primary classes (PP-VI). For the last two years, 2010 and 2011, this school was one of the ten top middle secondary schools in the country. Consequently most parents strive to enroll their children in this school and they admit that getting their children into TMSS is difficult.

The first day of school 2012

It's the 15th of February and all schools in Paro have re-opened for the 2012 academic year.

As I trudged up the hill towards TMSS I could see the parents, children, teachers, cars, dogs and cows all moving in the same direction, towards the school. The cows weaved their way through the children and the adults to continue their daily trip to the grazing ground on the hill above the school. The dogs joined in the children's excitement as they met their friends after two months' winter vacation. As everybody waited for the first assembly bell of the year to ring, the dogs and children scampered between the school buildings. The parents and the teachers stood in their own clusters, catching up with each other, with the much-appreciated warmth of the winter sun on their backs.

Figure 9.3 Bishaka and Boju

Figure 9.4 Pema and his mother

I walked towards the assembly courtyard, greeting and returning greetings to parents and teachers, most of whom I knew. I saw Bishaka sitting on her grandmother's lap at the back of the administrative building (Figure 9.3). She was in her new uniform and her short hair cut made her look more mature than she normally did in her casual clothes. Seeing me come towards them, they got up. I wished them, "*Namaste*"[55] and asked whether they had been sitting in the cold for long. *Boju* said she had, because she thought that the new students might be required to come quite early. I showed the two of them where the PP block was, on the other side of the main school building. Seeing the steep slope in front of the primary classes with no fencing of any kind around the edges, *Boju* began to worry. She said, "There's a possibility of small children tripping or being pushed down the slope". I too had an uneasy feeling that the slope was too close to the primary classrooms. As we were talking, I heard someone call, "Madam, madam"; I looked towards where the voice came from, but could not identify anyone, as all of them looked the same in their red checked *ghos* and *kiras*. Then suddenly I saw a small boy waving his hands, it was Yoeser, Sonam's little brother. The two

[55] A greeting in *Lhotshampakha*

boys and their mother were standing near the school laboratory building. I walked toward them as I greeted them, "*Kuzugzangpo"*[56] and added that it was very difficult to recognize the children in their uniforms and Sonam's mother laughed and added, "Yes, madam, I was telling Sonam to hold my hand until the bell rang so that I would not have to go looking for him among many who look like him".

As can be seen in Figure 9.4, Pema too sat on his mother's lap at the edge of the assembly courtyard. He was neatly dressed in his new uniform and had a crew cut. I wished him "Good morning" and when he did not respond his mother told him to return the greeting so, in a small voice, he said, "Good morning". I am not very sure if the cold was getting to him or if it was the number of children swirling around him, but he certainly did not look very happy to be there.

Figure 9.5 The assembly

Figure 9.6 The administrative block

At 8.30 a.m. the bell rang and all the teachers, children and parents walked into the assembly courtyard (Figures 9.5 and 9.6). There was brief confusion for the parents of the PP children as they were not sure where the PP lines were going to be, until they saw the PP teacher standing where the children should be. The parents took their children over to the teacher and left them there. The PP and the other primary teachers organized the PP children into a boys' line and a girls' line by height. Bishaka was the tallest so she stood at the back whilst Nima, being the smallest, stood in the front of the nine girls in PP. Sonam and Pema were in the middle of the boys' line. Pema's mother spotted her son still wearing his hat, so she swiftly moved between the lines, gently took off his hat and put it into his schoolbag. She caressed his well-shaven head and said some words in *Sherchogpakha*, to which he nodded his head obediently. The parents then moved to the edge of the courtyard. They stood in a group with

[56] A greeting in *Dzongkha*

their eyes and hearts focused on their small candidates in the PP line. I thought that at this moment all these people, who came from different walks of life, shared some common feelings of anxiety and happiness for their child's first day of school.

The teachers continued refining the lines by pushing and tugging at each child, as the Principal spoke through a loudspeaker emphasizing the importance of getting their lines straight. I saw Bishaka leaning on the short retention wall next to the PP line. Seeing this, the PP teacher came by and gently told her to stand straight. Nima gazed at the senior students who stood in front of her and Sonam looked around and yawned several times. A small boy in front of Pema started to cry and Pema looked at him sadly. Looking at these small boys brought back unpleasant memories of my son's first day at school some twenty years ago when my father and I stood on a similar assembly ground with our eyes focused on my four-and-half-year-old son who was sobbing in the PP line. With tears welling up in his eyes my father said to me: "You so called educators are depriving a child of his childhood rights to play, fun and freedom. I do not see much meaning in torturing children like this". To which I had no response other than to ponder on his words.

The class-teachers stood near their class lines and the rest of the teachers stood on a higher step in front of the children along with the principals (Figure 9.4). Finally the school captain commanded the morning-prayer to begin and the PP teacher moved between the lines to make the children fold their hands for the prayer, which some refused to do. The school sang a five minutes prayer to *Jampailyang* the goddess of wisdom. After that the school captain hoisted the national flag and they sang the national anthem for which most of the PP children had their hands still folded, the teacher moved between the lines and told them to keep their hands at their sides and stand straight. I looked at the children and suppressed a giggle thinking they must be wondering, "What's wrong with the teacher, sometimes she wants us to fold our hands and sometimes she doesn't". The principal started his welcome speech for the year 2012 and I went behind the buildings to check on the parents. *Boju* was the first one I came across, so I asked her how she felt on this very special day for her granddaughter. With an anxious look on her face she cleared her throat a couple of times and slowly said, "I am worried, thinking that she may cry or may look for me and in case she needs to go to the toilet whether she will be able to tell someone". I assured her that she would definitely be able to tell her teacher if she needed to go to the toilet. Nima's mother shared the same concern about her daughter wanting to go to the toilet.

The principal was still talking and the PP children started talking to each other in the line. The principal made the whole school greet the teachers in front by bowing down and saying, *"Kuzugzangpola",* he added, "Looks like you all have forgotten your teachers during your break". The PP teacher looked at me and laughed because half of her children continued chatting and did not bother curtseying.

Figure 9.7 Making lines for aerobics

Figure 9.8 Doing the aerobics

Around 8.50 a.m. the children got ready to do the morning aerobics (Figure 9.7). The teachers once more moved in between the lines and pushed and pulled children to make space for them to do the exercises. I was told that only TMSS carries out this aerobic exercise twice a week, the other schools in the valley do not. A few more boys in the PP line refused to stand any longer and began to cry, one ran towards his father and stopped mid-way as his father stomped his feet and looked angrily at him. The teacher put him back in the line where he continued to sob. The music for the exercise started and the children began moving. Most of the PP children stood still, a few followed the steps by observing the others near them. Bishaka smiled and participated in the aerobics with much amusement. I asked her if she was enjoying it and she nodded. Nima just stood there watching the girl next to her who was making some attempts at the steps. A teacher looked at Nima and then at me with an amused look and commented, "She is lost". Sonam and Pema tried to keep in rhythm by watching the PP repeaters (as the teacher called them), who seemed to know the steps quite well from having done them the previous year. The PP teacher joined in the exercise and the children copied her (Figure 9.8). By the end of the exercise there was no trace of the PP lines that the teachers had made earlier with much difficulty, they were all now standing in clusters. After the aerobics the parents and the children walked to the primary block.

The PP classes

Week One

The PP classroom was on the ground floor. From my experience of seeing many classrooms in different conditions, I was very impressed with this one, which was well illuminated and spacious. There were many charts, worksheets and flashcards from the previous year still hanging on the walls, which made the classroom look more colourful and cheerful. The class had six fairly wide square tables and a number of colourful small plastic chairs stacked up in the corner. I helped the teacher to space out the tables and chairs. The teacher's table was in one corner of the classroom near the green board.

The PP curriculum consisted of four main subjects, English, *Dzongkha*, Math and Environmental Studies (EVS) taught through six periods in a day. The PP class-teacher has to teach all the four subjects. The school uses a class teacher system all the way up to grade III and then moves to subject teachers. The children go home around 2 p.m. every day. Some schools have a lunch break for PP, but TMSS does not, children go home for lunch after the sixth period.

The PP teacher had not taught PP for the last couple years, so she was a bit anxious. During the FG discussions, she expressed that she was worried whether she would be able to handle a PP class. I assured her, saying, "You will be fine there were only twenty three children in the interview". She added, "And there are five repeaters". To add to her anxiety during the focus group (FG) conversations, her colleagues shared how difficult it was to handle PP classes for the first six months. One said, "They will eat in the class" and another, "They will move around as and when they like". Finally one more added, "For some months it is difficult for them because at home they eat when they feel like and in the class they have to sit *doing nothing* and sometimes they feel hungry".

The parents and the children poured into the PP classroom and some of the children took pleasure in looking at the picture cards on the walls. Most children ran around and picked a chair of their choice and sat with their friends, so some tables had six to eight children, some twos and threes and some none. A few parents and children sadly had tug-of-wars with the child pulling the parent towards the door of the class whilst the parent pulled the child towards his or her chair in the class. The teacher tried to coax one of the crying boys into sitting at a table. However, he continued to hang on to his mother's *kira*. The teacher placed her hands on her head and smiled at me helplessly. She fumbled in her bag for the list of

names. She held the list in her hand and requested the parents to move out of the class. However, they did not go very far.

I asked her what the rules in her school on 'parents in the campus' were and she said, "The parents are not allowed to sit near the classes because when the children see them they run out of the class, they are a disturbance". The FG teachers expressed the same sentiment in four of the other schools in the valley. One group of teachers said, "Usually we have them watching their children, so we keep them away". Another said, "Once the children get a little used to us I then tell the parents to go away". Yet another comfortably said, "We chase them away from the assembly ground".

Bishaka found herself a chair in front of the class, kept her bag on the chair and then told me that she had to go to the toilet. I let her go and before leaving she asked me to look after her bag while she was away. As the class teacher started calling out the attendance, Bishaka came back to find her chair already occupied by another girl, so she sat in the next chair. *Boju* must have witnessed this from outside so she walked into the class and asked the girl to swap seats so that her granddaughter could sit with the girl with whom she sat earlier, because both of them spoke in *Lhotshampakha*. However, both the girls moved to the other side of the table leaving Bishaka alone, which made *Boju* sad, as she slowly walked out of the class.

Sonam ran into the class and sat next to the boy with whom he used to play in the village. Pema walked in lazily and sat on the first empty chair he came across, he looked at a girl next to him being coaxed by her mother. His mother came in and asked if he wanted to sit next to another boy from their neighborhood. Pema did not respond so she left the room with a tinge of anxiety shrouding her face. The mother of another sobbing boy asked whether her son would like to sit near Pema but the boy refused to sit anywhere in the class. Pema looked at him indifferently.

Figure 9.9 Peeping parents

Figure 9.10 Waiting for the door to open

Nima was in no hurry to get a chair. With red flushed cheeks she stood in the middle of the class and watched the parents struggling with their crying children. After a while she looked around and saw the girl who stood next to her in the assembly line. She picked up a red chair from the stack and joined her. The teacher finally closed the door and a couple of children got up crying and ran towards the closed door (Figure 9.9). She put her arms around one of the boy's shoulders and tried to get him back in his seat, but to no avail. The parents watched all of this through the window (Figure 9.10). The teacher called out the names of the children. Some did not respond and some responded to all names. The teacher looked amused and said, "They don't even know their names". After the attendance was checked, with a loud voice the teacher introduced us to the class, she said, "You will have two teachers, okay?" Half of them nodded their heads while the rest did not bother looking up from what they were doing. The teacher asked if anyone wanted to sing a song in front of the class and the first volunteer was one of the repeaters. A second boy came up and started to sing the song, "*Neysem, Neysem*" in a small voice. This was a popular song from a recent Bhutanese movie, so I asked the class if anyone else knew the song, as I was aware that Bishaka and Sonam knew it well. The majority nodded their heads so we made them sing together while the boy in front danced. After a couple more songs the teacher instructed the children to go with their parents to the main administration building to complete some formal papers for the final enrolment. Before she could finish the sentence, half of the class was already on its way out.

The parents and the children sat in the staffroom (Figure 9.11). The PP teacher, the vice-principal and two other primary teachers were in the room with files, registers and papers on the tables. It was interesting to see that the majority of parents in the room were mothers and some of them did not know their husband's jobs, so there was much laughter as we called their husbands to ask them what their jobs were.

Figure 9.11 Parents waiting

Figure 9.12 Checking contact details

The other interesting thing was that most of them possessed a mobile phone, but did not know how to look up their husband's mobile number, which was required on the forms (Figure 9.12). The PP teacher instructed the parents in *Dzongkha* to buy six exercise books, four for the different subjects and two for homework. For mathematics, she said, "Buy the ones with boxes not plain pages". I translated in *Lhotshampakha* for the few parents who understood this language better than *Dzongkha*.

On the second day in class a couple of children were still crying for their parents. They wanted to go out to their parents and some of their younger siblings outside were also crying, wanting to come into the classroom. The teacher closed the door and called out the attendance once more. She handed out some books on each table and told them to look at the pictures, which occupied them noisily for some time. A small girl sat with her brother and looked through the pictures.

This time Bishaka sat with a new group at the back of the class as she flipped the pages of the picture book from the back to the front. Sonam and his friend shared a picture book between them. The teacher looked at me and said, "Ma'am he is a repeater", the boy looked at me and smiled. Nima sat with her neighbour Pema and they looked through the picture book and talked in their mother tongue. Nima noticed a boy inching towards the door so she shouted in *Dzongkha*, "Ma'am he is going". The teacher looked up from her lesson-plan book and brought the boy back to his seat. We collected the picture books and the teacher called the children's attention by shaking a tin full of pebbles and then said, "Keep quiet". Some of the more attentive children repeated, "Keep quiet". The teacher and I looked at each other and laughed. She then told them that she was going to start the lesson and they should listen and watch her carefully. The first topic in the English and *Dzongkha* curriculum was, 'Greetings'. According to the instructions given in the curriculum documents, the teacher demonstrated both in English and *Dzongkha* how to greet teachers in the school. She showed repeated actions of bowing and said, "*Good morning madam; Good morning sir"*, she did the same in *Dzongkha* and then asked for volunteers to do the same. Nima faced some problems in the *Dzongkha* utterances, which the teacher corrected instantly and made Nima repeat them after her.

After the first period the children were taken to the toilets (Figure 9.13). Some of the parents followed them. Just outside the toilet, the teacher instructed the children not to pee outside the pot. Nima was standing outside the girls' toilet. A boy walked up towards the girls' toilet and

she instantly shouted, “Ma’am, ma’am”; the teacher looked up and shouted, “Wai, that’s the girls’ toilet, yours is here”. The boy smiled and ran back towards the classroom. I thought maybe he was just curious to see what the girls’ toilet looked like.

Figure 9.13 A parent and the teacher helping the children

Week Two

The PP children were now much more active during the aerobic exercises after the morning assembly. They now had some senior boys and girls right in front of their lines to demonstrate the steps. There were no more crying children and fewer parents near the PP assembly lines or near the classrooms. It was the English period and ‘weather’ was the topic being taught. The teacher pointed at the self-made weatherboard, took out the word Tuesday (Figure 9.14) and said, “Today is Tuesday”. She made the class say the phrase. The majority of the class just repeated the last word “Tuesday” several times. Next she spoke with gestures, “Now, is it sunny or rainy?” and then she translated it into *Dzongkha*. One boy in the class replied in *Dzongkha*, “It is sunny”. Then she made the whole class repeat, “It is sunny”. By now she had lost the attention of half the class. Sonam and his friend were busy talking about his new spider man pencils and the Ben Ten geometry box. Nima was in a group where none of the girls spoke her mother tongue. As the girls chattered in their own language, Nima looked from one face to the other in the group. Pema watched with amusement at the boy alongside him trying to put his arms around the neck of the girl sitting next to him. Noticing the inattentive class, the teacher looked at them seriously and folded her arms. Some of the children also folded their arms. She went to her table, shook the tin of pebbles and put her finger to her lips. The class went silent for a moment so she grabbed the opportunity to repeat the new words again. Pointing outside she said in *Dzongkha*, “See the sun is shining”. Some of the boys, including Sonam, got up and ran towards the window to look out, thinking it was what she asked them to do. The teacher quickly said, “Sit down. Go back to your seat”. The teacher then took out a newsprint paper with the rhyme, ‘Roly, Poly’ written on it, she stuck it on the

board and told the class that they were going to sing a song (Figure 9.15). This is the first rhyme in the PP anthology of rhymes and songs.

Figure 9.14 The weather board

Figure 9.15 Doing the "Roly, Poly"

During another English period the teacher showed a stone to the class and asked, "What is this?" Some repeated the question and some answered, "stone". The teacher repeated slowly and loudly, "It is a stone" and the class repeated the whole sentence after her. This is the first English language structure to be taught in the first week of the PP class. The teacher went back to the desk and shook the tin once more. Bishaka and a couple of other girls were sitting with their backs to the teacher as they sat at their tables. She put her hand into her pink school bag to take out her pencil and the teacher shouted, "Do not play with your bags". She quickly withdrew her hand and turned around to face the teacher.

The teacher went from table to table chanting, "What is this?" and "This is a stone", making the groups repeat the sentence after her. She then picked up other objects in the class to ask questions about. Nima answered, "*is-tick*", which was instantly corrected by the teacher by saying, "This is a stick". Pema's tired eyes and inactiveness made me empathize with him and the others who could not concentrate. At the same time I could understand the teacher's predicament, needing to cover the syllabus and being answerable to the Education Monitoring Officers (EMOs) should they pay her a surprise visit one day. She makes sure that she is on track with her lesson-plans and curriculum coverage, which does not allow much time for getting to know her students or their work. For instance, children draw very interesting things in the class as part of their 'pre-writing activities', but the teacher does not show any interest in what they have drawn or why, besides seeing that they have completed the 'pre-writing activity'.

A bell rang and it was time for the morning 15 minutes break. The teacher stood in the doorway and made each child ask permission in English, "Please can I go out?" A line in the

English curriculum for PP reads, "*Practice these courtesy words as and when the situation arises"*. Sonam was in a hurry to get out. However, because he could not use the courtesy words correctly the teacher made him repeat them. Bishaka and Nima got them right the first time so they ran out towards the toilets. Pema did not get up from his chair until the classroom was empty. Sonam and some more PP children ran towards the main school campus where their parents were sitting in a group behind one of the buildings. They all sat down with their parents as each one took out their food for the children. They shared food and tea among themselves (Figure 9.17).

Figure 9.16 Practicing "May I come in

Figure 9.17 Tea break

Looking at them I wished all the others in PP had something to eat and drink during the break when the teachers also took a tea break. The parents washed their children's mouth and hands with bottles of water that they brought from home, shook off the dry grasses from their *ghos* and *kiras* and send them back to the class while they finished off what was left of the food. The children had to again ask, "Please can I come in?" Sonam's friend said, "Please, can in out?" the teacher patted him softly on his back and said, "Did you not learn this last year?" (Figure 9.16) He smiled happily and nodded his head and my heart went out to him.

Week Three

I entered the class and got a feeling that the teacher had reshuffled the children's seating places once more. This time Nima was back with her day one friend and two other boys. Three of them could speak in their mother tongue, while the fourth was a Parop who could not understand what the others were saying, so it was now his turn to gaze as the others chatted in their language. Sonam sat in the same group, whilst his friend from the village has been moved to the front. The teacher held a copy of the Class PP Handwriting Book in her hand and demonstrated how to join horizontal dotted lines on the green board (Figures 9.18 & 9.19).

Meanwhile, Sonam, with a grumpy face, came running across the class towards me and said in a small voice, “I want to sit with my friend”. I consented with a nod and instantly his face lit up. He ran back to his table. He kept his pencil box and book on the orange chair and carried it around to the front. He paused when the teacher looked towards the class and continued on his journey when her back was turned (Figure 9.18).

Figure 9.18 Handwriting period

Figure 9.19 Sonam joining his friend

The teacher continued instructing both in *Dzongkha* and English, how to join the dots and then distributed the handwriting books. She demonstrated how to flip open the book with their right hand, she said, “Do not lick your fingers to open the books”. She then moved from table to table showing them how to do it the proper way. The teacher walked towards me with a book in her hand and said, “Look ma’am, how the parents have covered the book”, I looked at it and understood what she meant; the first page and the cover page were covered together with brown paper. I said, “Maybe the parents do not really know from which page the writing actually starts”.

Figure 9.20 Meditation

Figure 9.21 Sonam plays with his magnets

A couple of days later I went back to the class and they were getting ready to practise meditation, an activity undertaken in all the schools in the country as a part of the concept of ‘Educating for GNH’. The children were instructed to close their eyes and sit still for a minute. Sonam found it very difficult to keep his eyes closed (Figure 9.20). After a minute’s

meditation, the teacher said, “Class open your eyes and not your mouth, we are now going to learn *Dzongkha”*. She showed a flash card with a picture of a pencil labeled in English. She asked in Dzongkha, “What is this?” and the children answered, “This is a pencil”. The teacher called out to Nima as she saw her playing, to answer the question, she uttered, “pencil” however, Sonam quickly replied, “peecee” which was the correct enunciation in *Dzongkha*, the teacher made Nima repeat it after him.

Figure 9.22 a Dzongkha lesson

Figure 9.23 Bishaka learning *Dzongkha*

The teacher pasted all the flashcards that she presented to the class on the green board (Figure 9.22 & 9.23). She called Bishaka and handed her, a long stick with which she told her to point at the picture of “*sanaug* or *kara*”, meaning chalk (Figure 9.23). She first pointed to the picture of a table and then to a chair. The teacher asked the class who could help Bishaka and a girl came up and pointed the stick at the chalk. The teacher told Bishaka, in *Lhotshampakha,* to look at the board. She asked the class whether the girl was right and they answered she was and they clapped their hands. By now a number of children with their bags on their back were standing near the green board to get a chance to point at the pictures.

The teacher noticed Sonam playing so she called out his name and asked him in *Dzongkha* what she was holding. Sonam effortlessly replied, “*sanaug*” and the teacher said, “*lekso*!” meaning “well done!”

Figure 9.24 Pema takes a nap

Figure 9.25 A parent feeds Pema and his friend

As can be seen in Figure 9.24, Pema by now was very tired; he laid his head on his arms and closed his eyes. I quietly walked to his table and asked him whether he was feeling sick and he shook his head. I then asked whether he was hungry and he nodded. The teacher later told me that the children were active in the first and the second periods and after that their interest level always dropped. She took the class outside to play a blind-fold game. I watched them while chatting with the mother of one of the PP children. She asked Pema if he wanted some tea and biscuits and he nodded. Another hungry boy joined him and they shared the biscuits and tea (Figure 9.25). Meanwhile the others were taken to the space between the two buildings to play a game, as the playground for the school was not yet ready. After the game they sang some more songs and then dispersed for the day.

Week Four

It was tea break for the teachers. The PP teacher and I walked up to the primary block staffroom and joined the other primary teachers for tea. The teachers were sitting on the ground outside the small staffroom with a couple of huge tea flasks and containers full of beaten maize and biscuits. As we sat down the PP teacher said, "I desperately need some tea for my parched throat". The others laughed and one commented, "In PP we have to shout the whole day, don't we?" Another teacher looked at me and said, "Ma'am most think that the teachers who know nothing are placed as PP teachers, they do not know how difficult it is to discipline and make them learn something". I politely agreed with her. Yet another added, "We have to deal with thirty to forty children who know nothing, we have to teach them everything, behaviour, speaking, reading and writing". Saying this she looked at me and I commented that the other teachers in the valley said the same.

We returned to the class and found all the children inside, making a lot of noise, so the teacher ran in quickly and hushed them, made them fold their arms and put their fingers on their mouths, something that I was used to doing in the primary schools some forty years back. The teacher tried to introduce the names of some basic colours in English. She asked the class, "What is the colour of your *wonju?"* The class continued to be noisy so she said, "Class meditate now, close your eyes, one, two, three start". For a few seconds the class was quiet. The teacher resumed the lesson on the six basic colours. Next, the teacher pulled out a pile of blank papers from her drawer and said that they were going to draw. Upon hearing this Sonam and Bishaka got very excited. Before distributing the drawing paper the teacher made the children hold their pencils in their hands and then move their arms in the air clock-wise making an 'o' in air, she went around the class, held children's wrists and helped them make

the movements. I took a peep at her lesson-plan for the day and saw that the PP children were now getting ready to write their first English letter, which was 'o'. In the later lessons they would practice the other letters that follow the same strokes as 'o'.

Bishaka was now sitting with Nima and three other new group mates. It was an EVS lesson and the teacher hung a cloth poster on the board: it had family terms such as father, mother and brother, written both in *Dzongkha* and English along with pictures. She had a couple of volunteers to name their family members after which she asked the class some questions. Bishaka made few responses, but she constantly kept her eyes on the teacher. Nima listened to the teacher as she introduced the term '*azhim*' meaning elder sister. Nima raised her hand and said - "Ma'am I have an *azhim"*. The teacher commented, "Good" and continued to ask the class how many of them had "*angay*" and "*agay*" meaning grandmother and grandfather respectively. Pema instantly raised both his hands in the air. I thought to myself, "Yes, that's right you at least have about six grandparents and great-grandparents in your family". The teacher asked Pema the *Dzongkha* term for grandfather however he replied in *Sherchogpakha,* "*meymey*", so the teacher translated the term in *Dzongkha* for the class.

Sonam sat with a new group of children at the back of the class. With his chin resting on the table he was totally engrossed with a piece of string that he twirled around his fingers and wrist. I thought, "Poor Sonam, he has finally given up following his village mate". Meanwhile the teacher hung a poster of a family on the board and introduced the boy as Dorji, the girl as Dechen and the baby on the back of the mother as Wangmo. I guessed, they were now getting ready for the first Big Book "Dechen and Dorji". The PP teacher was much happier now and she commented that her PP children were much more quiet and disciplined.

CHAPTER 10

As teachers actively construct the theory and practice behind research-based household visits, the challenging sense that knowledge is open-ended, active, and continuous can create new and meaningful environments of learning for all concerned. (Gonzalez et al., 2005, p. 91)

HOME 'FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE'

Introduction

Figure 10.1 Nima and Bishaka with their grandparents

The days after the confirmation of my candidature and before I first stepped into the households of my participants in Bhutan were quite anxious ones. When I boarded the small Qantas link plane at the Armidale airport for my data collection journey, my "virtual bag" (Thomson, 2002) was filled with the theoretical goodness of the 'funds of knowledge' concept and approach gleaned from my readings. I was filled with confidence by the words of Moll and colleagues who described 'funds of knowledge' as being based on the premise, that people are competent and have knowledge and their life experiences have given them that knowledge. Nevertheless, as I flew over the Himalayans, I began to have mixed feelings. The heart-warming sight from the air of snow-clad peaks and the red chillies drying on the roofs of the houses, and the soft music of the Bhutanese flute from the speakers in the plane could not silence the thoughts of my reasons for returning home. I was on a mission to "match rhetoric with practice" (Bodrova & Leong, 2007, p. 3). I wondered whether the Bhutanese households would possess information that I could consider to be 'funds of knowledge'. Doubts and worries raised their heads as I was not sure of what to expect. To a certain extent my predicament was influenced by the 'well accepted and rarely challenged perceptions of deficit views commonly held by literate Bhutanese about the illiterate people in Bhutan. However, as I gained a true understanding of the repositories of knowledge in the households, despite their lack of literacy, I was reminded of what Patterson and Baldwin (2001, p. 127) had to say

about a 'funds of knowledge' research that it, "brought [them] face to face with [their ignorance and [their] arrogance".

Strategies and skills of survival were prevalent in the everyday lives of these families. Their household behaviours, practices and ideologies manifested their strength in sustaining the economic, social and cultural survival of the families. Their 'strategizing skills needed to make things work, their natural practices of interdependence, reciprocity, hospitality, responsibilities, intergenerational relationships and respect, along with their faith in destiny, religion and education demonstrated rich 'funds of knowledge' that was beyond all expectations.

The 'Educating for GNH' (MoE, Bhutan, 2010c, p. 14) describes happiness as "multi-dimensional". It states that, "If a person got various elements under each of the nine domains of life right, the chances of happiness would be much higher". By this definition, then the four families that I worked with proved to be model practitioners of the GNH philosophy. The nine domains of GNH have seventy-two variables (MoE, Bhutan, 2010c, Appendix D, pp. 285-289). These are a list of values that could enhance the GNH philosophy. Most of these values were evident in the practices and ideologies of the families and their communities. I cannot claim that the four families with whom I worked are representative of all Bhutanese households; yet, I am confident that they represent a significant majority of the households in Bhutan.

My discussions in this chapter focus mainly on the collective activities of the household members and not specifically concentrate on any particular child. I believe that the household members' collective knowledge forms the household 'funds of knowledge' which Putney and Wink (2002, p. 100) describe as, "the situatedness of what a family must do to live and even thrive in a particular location". Like the Indigenous people of Australia (Fleer & William-Kennedy, 2002; Fleer, 2004), the Mayans of Gautemala (Correa-Chavez & Rogoff, 2009; Correa-Chavez et al., 2005) and the Mexicans in Tucson (Velez- Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992; Moll et al., 1992; Gonzalez et al., 1993), Bhutanese children too are an integral part of most adult activities in the households and in the wider community. Parents and kin take them along to funerals, birthday celebrations and to community meetings. As "third party" observers (Rogoff et al., 2003) they are a part of everything that is said and done around them. This is not because the adults realize the essence of involving children in the daily activities as "legitimate peripheral participants" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) or understand that observation

and listening-in are pervasive in children's lives and are effective (Rogoff et al., 2003); nor have they heard Vygotsky say that, "through others we become ourselves" (1997, p. 105). This way of looking after children has been a natural practice in most Bhutanese households for many decades. The Royal Government of Bhutan (PCoB, 1999) strongly believes that:

> A child in a family, which is traditionally extended, is the centre of attention, love and affection. Every family member, siblings to grandparents, plays a role in childcare and development. It is generally perceived that child development is a natural process and the varieties of activities that stimulate child development are carried out more instinctively than consciously. (PCoB, 1999, p. 41)

In urban areas, however, larger numbers of parents and older siblings work away from the home, and younger children attend early learning centres, where their experiences are very different from that of home care. Most of these centres aspire to apply a Western perspective to early childhood care and education, which is usually taken unquestioningly as the right way. But on the other hand, many researchers have now begun to wonder whether the general views and beliefs about best practices in early childhood education are relevant to children of all cultures (Dahlberg et al., 1999; Rogoff, 1990, 1998; Brennan, 2007; Fleer, 2003, 2004; Correa-Chavez et al., 2005, Correa-Chavez & Rogoff, 2009). The impetus for the emergence of early childhood education in Bhutan only began during the ninth five-year plan (PCoB, 1999); therefore, Bhutan is at a juncture where it can select the practices that best suit its children. Bhutanese believe that we are "social synthesizers with the demonstrated ability to assimilate influences from far afield and to transform them into something that is consistent with our system of values and is distinctively Bhutanese" (PCoB, 1999, p.20). Therefore, I would like to believe the same and aspire to incorporate what is best for our young children.

This chapter will illustrate some of the common knowledge, skills and practices that are vibrant among the four households with whom I shared close inquiry relationships. I present and discuss the practices and ideologies of "what people do and what they say about what they do" (Gonzalez, 2005, p. 40) by using relevant values listed under the nine domains of the 'Educating for GNH' theory. Rogoff (2003, p. 65) states: "developing an identity as a member of the community and becoming knowledgeably skilful are part of the same process, with the former, motivating, shaping and giving meaning to the latter, which it subsumes".

'Funds of knowledge' in the Bhutanese homes

During a period of four months as a participant-observer in the four households, I came across a corpus of local knowledge and skills exhibited by both the family members and others in the

communities. I chose seven common practices that the families exhibited strongly in their varied interesting ways as themes for discussion in this chapter. My observations of the families and of my own experiences of growing up in a Bhutanese family and of rearing two boys of my own, convinced me that important knowledge, skills and strategies were not always learnt in "direct and declarative" ways (Brown et al., 1989, p. 40) and neither was teaching "possible and meaningful unless situated in a social cultural context" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 150). Children learn a great deal from being on the periphery even without much direct participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Rogoff, 2003; Fleer, 2003). As Van Manen (1991) has observed that the power of childhood experiences have shown that we are historical beings, whose life histories provide permanence and identity to the person we are.

Fleer (2003, p. 77) rightly asserted that to make cultural sayings and stories meaningful and useful, they have to be reified so that their existence is perceivable and they can be used as a "tool that changes our experiences of the world". Therefore, each of the themes in this chapter begins with an appropriate Bhutanese aphorism. These aphorisms are based on moral values that most parents repeatedly narrate to their children at home or convey through the stories in the *Dzongkha* readers in the schools. These values and beliefs are embedded in the seventy-two variables of the GNH philosophy. However, the rich 'funds of knowledge' discussed in the following sections are not exhaustive examples of what the households possess. The four families' 'virtual bags' of knowledge are a lot heavier and richer than it is possible to set out in this chapter.

Strategizing skills

In most of the Bhutanese fables narrated by the elders to the children, the hare is portrayed as possessing acumen of "thab thang neycup"(ways and means) that get him out of complicated situations, help him tackle, confront and dodge hardships and dangers. Thus, I see the hare as possessing adequate "strategizing skills" (Sugarman, 2010) *that keep him surviving and thriving. Such survival skills and quick thinking are made aware to children through the many interesting fables.*

Tenery (2005, p.129) describes "strategizing" as responding to difficulties through the development of "coping and survival skills" which she recommends as useful learning resources. To cope and adapt to all sorts of changing circumstances and contexts, Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992, p. 317) believe that all the household members had to be "generalists" trying their hands at many things to sustain themselves which the GNH variables

term as the “community vitality” (Appendix D, p.309). Such households were described by as a “strategizing household” rather than a struggling one (Sugarman, 2010, p. 96).

Strategizing skills were evident in all the four families as they navigated through their lives. With the exception of Sonam’s family, the others had migrated from their distant villages into towns looking for better work and better education for their children. The experience of migration provided them a watershed for redefining their identities and roles (Olmedo, 1997). Nima’s parents were both farmers in a remote village. Schools were too far away and difficult to reach for their children to attend. Life in the village was very tough. The family decided that Nima’s father should venture out ahead of his family to the capital city to look for a job that could provide a better situation, especially in terms of educating their children. For two years he moved from one job to another, from door-to-door sales person, to truck driver, then to taxi driver, all the while trying to find the best way to earn a sustainable living for his extended family which consisted of his immediate family members, parents and grandparents - eleven people in all. In the village, Nima’s mother and grandfather worked both in their own fields and in others to make ends meet while her six-year-old daughter took care of the younger brother at home. All the family members had important roles to play in this process.

Figure 10.2 Nima participates in the family works

Children were able to observe and join in life’s various struggles. They became increasingly involved in the mature activities of the household and the community and in the process learnt many life skills for later use. As noted by Olmedo (2007) children who grew up in these situations learnt from others how to deal with economic and social challenges that they faced in their day-to-day lives (Figure. 10.2). After several years of struggling, the family finally managed to buy their own taxi and enroll their five children in school, although for the two older children, schooling came at quite a late age. Stories of such experiences were frequently narrated in the family, in the same way that I heard it from the elder daughter while Nima and

her brother listened with me. These stories became family 'funds of knowledge' of being resourceful and proactive in life.Children shared these stories in a tone filled with admiration and gratitude for their parents for what they had been through in order to give them a more comfortable life. Paradise and Rogoff (2009) assert that:

> A learner's emotional involvement and the accompanying self-generated motivation are not only based on being present and socially oriented toward participation. They are also the result of a deep-seated ''bond of interest and commitment'' and a sharing of values and goals, as well as ongoing participation in a shared community existence (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 130).

In Bishaka's family when it was time for *Bajay*, her grandfather to retire from the Royal Bhutan Army, his wife, *Boju* was worried about what to do next. Their children invited them to live with them; however, *Boju* said, "we did not want to be a burden on the children who themselves were struggling to survive" (*Boju,* personal communication, December 14, 2011). The children decided that the old couple should not return to the village where life was too tough and instead helped them to set up a small shop in Paro town. Seeing that Bishaka and *Boju* could handle the shop well, *Bajay* took up the opportunity of running a snooker house a little further away from town, in the hope of making some extra money. Around the end of my time with them *Boju* and Bishaka had converted half of their shop into a vegetable shop. The reason for the conversion as explained by Bishaka was that "vegetables fetch better money and also we need not buy vegetables for our meals" (Bishaka, personal communication, February 23, 2012). By participating in the adult activities Bishaka learnt to evaluate and compare businesses and weigh them in terms of profits, in the process she learnt to be analytical, a skill that would prove very useful in her later life.

Figure 10.3 Bishaka with *Boju* in the shop

Over the years, *Boju*'s daughters tried their hand at all sorts of businesses such as grocery shop, meat shop and handicraft shop whichever was in demand in the market place and they

shared this business acumen with *Boju* and Bishaka who were 'newcomers' in the business department. Along with *Boju*, Bishaka learnt to be a productive member of the family by being with adults while they undertook 'community tasks and activities' (Brennan, 2007) and by 'pitching in' (Rogoff, 2003) whenever interested or required (Figure10.3). Vygotsky (1981, p. 164) confirmed that the "mind rarely worked alone" through the usage of their 'distributed intelligences' (Vygotsky, 1987; Pea, 1993) and mindfulness about each other, they adapted well to the vicissitudes of life. These were very useful survival skills that Bishaka could fall back on incase she did not fare well in education.

Figure 10.4 Getting the *lue* ready

Sonam's *Angay* (grandmother) strategized in a clever way. She owned a large house that remained empty throughout most of the year as all her children worked elsewhere. It is a custom in Bhutan to give children his or her share of the land when they are old enough to take care of it. However, *Angay* had not yet distributed among her eight children the many acres of land that she owned, for she said, "This gives my children a reason to at least come home to celebrate, '*Lomba*[57]*'* (Figure 10.4)*, 'Jala*[58]*'* and *'Lochey*[59]*'* (*Angay*, personal communication, December 19, 2011). Although some of her children would have preferred to have a piece of land as soon as possible, out of respect for *Angay*'s decision they did not voice their desires. Sonam's father smiled at me and said, "I will receive it when she decides to give" (Ugyen, personal communication, March 15, 2012). This pattern of ethical behaviour of revering the elders' decisions and their words was expected of Sonam as well for it is an important value taught to children in the Bhutanese culture. This value is further reinforced in the schools through the policy of 'Educating for GNH'.

[57] The Bhutanese 11th month of the year
[58] Paddy Harvest
[59] Annual religious ceremony

With more and more children having to move where their families' jobs take them, an increasing number of family houses in the rural areas stay vacant except for the older family members who remain in the villages. *Angay* rented out some of the rooms to trainee teachers who helped her with chores around the house when they had the time and she gave them rice and dairy products, whenever she could. Sonam took great pleasure in delivering these goods to the tenants as they always remembered to give him some sweets. Sonam spent most of his days with *Angay* as his parents had jobs to attend to. He was a legitimate member of the community of practice within which *Angay* and he "tuned relations with each other and with the world" (Wenger, 1998, p. 861) in their daily lives in the household.

When *Angay* heard of Ugyen's (Sonam's father) transfer to the Paro bank, she quickly built another smaller house near her house so that her son and his family could live close to her. They would not have to pay rent and she would be able to see her two grandsons every day. Such strategizing moves demonstrate the close ties between family members and also illustrate gestures of caring and sharing which become inculcated in the young as they observe the activities of the adults around them. This way of learning continues throughout their lives as "each new situation made new demands and provided opportunities for further development" (Wells, 2000, p. 5), and their 'funds of knowledge' too changed according to "changes in the empirical reality" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 318). *Angay*'s household lacked manpower for fieldwork, therefore she let other families in the community use some of her fields and they offered her half the yield at the end of each year. This strategy guaranteed enough rice for her family. This was another strategy that assured enough rice for the whole family whilst also putting her land to good use.

Moll et al. (1992, p. 134) state that when a household's 'funds of knowledge' are not sufficient to solve a problem, the members activate their relationships with others who have better means of helping them out. This was evident when it was time to enroll the children from the four families, into their first year of school. As per the Ministry of Education rules, children had to be six years old to be enrolled. They also had to be enrolled into the school that was nearest to their community. According to these rules none of the four children would have been able to gain admission to the school that they now attended. All of the families made use of their social networks to get their children into their preferred school. Nima's parents requested the help of their neighbors who were teachers and with whom they always maintained a relationship of respect. *Boju* requested the help of a village friend who was the

wife of a teacher. Maintaining networks of friendships, connection and favors is considered essential for survival as well as harmony in the "community vitality" (Appendix D, p.286).

Strategizing skills or *'thab thang neycup'* came into play throughout the families' daily lives of which the children were active parts. Although the children may not play lead roles, they were always involved in the discussions and activities as "quintessentially legitimate peripheral participants in the adult social world" (Lave and Wenger 1991, p. 31). Azuma (1994) termed this form of incidental learning as "osmosis" (Azuma, 1994, as cited in Brennan, 2007, p. 5). He observed that children picked up cultural skills, values and mannerisms which the GNH philosophy advocates as "cultural values" (Appendix D, p. 286). In this way the children in this study were already learning and taking part in essential strategizing skills that would become essential for their success in life.

Sharing responsibilities

"Gangkhu baney" (taking responsibility) were earnest words that the kings of Bhutan have repeatedly used in most of their speeches to the people. It mainly emphasized the mindful sharing of responsibilities, which undoubtedly had to develop initially from homes. A common fable used by many in Bhutan to illustrate the essence of sharing responsibilities, was the "Thuenpa Puen Zhi" – the "four harmonious friends", the elephant, the monkey, the rabbit and the bir. Despite their varying sizes and strengths, they shared equally important "gangkhu" (responsibility) in nurturing a tree, which provided them the food and the shade they needed. The illustrations of the four friends were evident on the walls of every dzong[60] and monastery in the country. Most houses have them too to remind people of a responsible and harmonious living.

Figure 10.5 Thuenpa Phuen Zhi

http://www.pinklotus.co.uk/thisthangkha.asp?ID=1823

Fleer (2003, p. 76) states that "meaning does not reside in an individual or even in printed matter, but rather exists through a dynamic process of living in the world". Every member of the family contributed to its harmonious functioning. They were mindful of the fact that every pair of hands counted in sustaining the family welfare as can be seen in Figure 10.6. Nima's father Sonam taxied from early morning till late into the night while his wife took care of the children and the parents at home. To add to the income of the house Yangzom also wove cloth and collected scrap materials to sell in India. She said, "I do not really know how much money I can make out of this, but I have to do something for I have five children and parents

[60] They used to be forts in ancient times but now used as the main administrative building in each district.

to look after" (Yangzom, personal communication, December 17, 2011). The children too, played important roles in sustaining the household.

Figure 10.6 Nima and her brothers share chores

Unlike in the classrooms, children at home are not passive bystanders (Moll et al. 1992), they participate with "Intent concentration and initiative" and their "collaborative participation is expected when they are ready to help in shared endeavours" (Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 176). For instance, during the holidays, Nima and her brothers and sister ran from door-to-door in the community, collecting bottles, plastics and tins and piled them at the back of their house for their parents to sell to recyclers in India. Nima could only count up to 10 and she grouped the bottles into tens. Her older siblings and mother used multiples of tens to count the bottles and stacked them. Through such joint activities the family members, both old and young provided "support and assistance for each other in the interests of achieving the goal of the activity" (Wells, 2000, p. 5). It is true that "when young children are included in the social as well as the economic life of their community, they are participants in the adult world, not in the way" (Nsamenang, 1992, as cited in Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 24). One day, we sat on Nima's parents' bed and looked through some photographs. Nima picked up a photo where she and her mother were stacking bottles at the back of their house. She pointed to the bottles and said, "This will buy my school bag." (Nima, personal communication, December 17, 2011). I felt very touched to see that she understood the benefits to be gained from this hard work and admired her willingness to assist when she could, although her mother did not let her help when there were broken bottles lying around. Most of the time children participated in the same activities of the everyday life of the community as the adults, "contributing in real ways as they learnt about their shared economic and social reality" (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 106).

All children shared the daily household responsibilities in their own capacities. Wherever and whenever possible they pitched in. For instance, besides providing a helping hand to her

mother and older siblings, five-year old Nima also had the much bigger responsibility of walking her semi-blind grandmother to the place where she sat and turned the huge prayer wheel. It was a daily job that involved maneuvering through traffic as she held her grandmother's hand and carried her mat under the other arm. She looked to the left and right as instructed by her mother and then led her grandmother across the street to safety. In the evening she went to bring her back and followed the same procedures again. This meaningful and applied learning differed from the step-by-step learning of the school where instructions such as 'look right, look to the left and then cross the road', are read in a text book without the meanings being physically contextualized. A learning that is different from children making sense of things by being involved in their world.

Figure 10.7 Sonam and his little brother

Sonam, who was five and a half years old, had the responsibility of looking after his three year old brother Yoeser, when the adults were busy (Figure 10.7). He occupied his brother well by playing games, drawing and making small toys, such as paper kites, for him, a skill that he had learnt from a cousin during a visit to Thimphu, which he then "re-created as opportunities arose to so" (Hedges & Cullen, 2011, p. 931). He was like a small caregiver and an educator who provided his brother with authentic and meaningful experiences that Yoeser might not be able to receive in most daycare centers in the country.

Unlike the daycare teachers he never asked a question to which he already knew an answer or simplified his language into a word or two to make his brother understand. As he sat engrossed in the task at hand his little brother observed him with keen interest and ready to join in as and when he wanted to. Although Sonam preferred playing outside the house in the apple orchard, most days he chose to stay inside the house with his brother while his mother made some progress on the loom. He said, "If I go out, Yoeser follows me and then he falls, so my mother told me to stay inside" (Sonam, personal communication, January 6, 2012). Not

only did he learn to be useful, he also learnt to delay his own gratification for an endeavor considered important for the family (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009).

Figure 10.8 Sonam's daily chores

When he was not required to babysit, he helped *Angay* to fetch things from the basement to the main common room on the third floor, ascending and descending the two ladders in the three storied house several times in a day. In his own house besides the babysitting task, his mother had given him the chore of filling up buckets in their bathroom with water from the tap outside (Figure 10.8). He also made sure that the water container in the chicken coop was always filled otherwise he said, with a serious face, "*Angay* would not let him eat the eggs" (Sonam, personal communication, January 6, 2012).

Though these were small individual tasks, the enthusiasm, interest and responsibility demonstrated by the child explained how learning at home differed from school because there was virtually no failure (Moll et al. 1992; Velez-Ibanez& Greenberg, 1992; Spindler & Spindler, 1989; Paradise & Rogoff, 2009) in this kind of learning and nor was there anyone to reprimand if something did not work. These situations teach children to persevere, to experiment, to manipulate, and to delay gratification. It is clear that in these situations children collaborate and contribute to the functions of the household according to their ability (Wells, 2000).

Although, most of *Angay*'s children lived and worked in different places, they always contributed in terms of labour, money, materials for the ceremonies, rituals, paddy plantations and harvests, which are very important events of a Bhutanese household in the village. Their monk- *Jojo*[61], (Sonam's *Jojo*'s brother), took care of fixing the auspicious days for the events

[61] Grandfather in Dzongkha

and the recruitment of other monks to perform the ceremonies. Like the '*Thunpa Puen Zhi'* all members big and small knew their responsibilities and carried them out responsibly.

Figure 10.9 Bishaka's chores

For six-year-old Bishaka, learning was definitely a shared responsibility in "real situations" (Fleer, 2003). She and *Boju* were like business partners; *Boju* took care of the sales in the shop and Bishaka carried out most of the errands outside the shop, getting loose change i.e coins and notes from other shops, and buying smaller items from other retailers to sell in their shop (Figure 10.9). Between the two they had a kind of a shared understanding or what Vygotsky (1978) would describe as "inter- subjectivity" on how to run their shop. In the preparation of the snacks to be sold, she helped to pack it into plastic bags. Bishaka said they put fewer pieces of 'finger-chips' in the bags because they took up a lot of oil during the preparation, which added to their cost. Thus as an apprentice to *Boju* not only did Bishaka learn to prepare the snack, she also gained knowledge of estimating profits and loss, which at school would be taught only when she reached the upper primary classes. This meant that her zone of proximal development in this area was more advanced than the perception of her age group's capability. Wartofsky (1983, p. 57) rightly states that "children become what they are taken to be by others". *Boju*'s interaction with Bishaka was always at an adult level and she always assigned her adult tasks; therefore, Bishaka functioned like an adult when she was with *Boju*.

For five-year-old Pema, a regular task that he undertook with great interest was to help his mother cut cloth pieces for *sung*[62] ceremonies that his mother conducted, at least once a week. His fine-motor co-ordination was very good and he could cut very small pieces of cloth. Cutting activities are reinforced in the PP class as 'pre-writing' exercises for reading and

[62] Incense smoke offerings to gods and deities.

writing. If the teacher knew what Pema was capable of doing, she could assign other more advanced 'pre-writing' tasks that could expand his ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). Amanti, (2005, p.137) a teacher-researcher, who worked with the Tucson Academics states that being aware of the students' prior knowledge can prevent the waste of time of "teaching facts students already know" so that teachers can move on to more abstract and critical learning. This way, learning could be used to enhance the abilities that require the assistance of others to develop. The "everyday concepts" and the "scientific concepts" (Vygotsky, 1987) should work together harmoniously so that the earlier ones create an experiential path for the development of the latter, which would offer organization to a child's thinking.

Lave and Wenger (1991) observe that in any socio-cultural activities, after time, a member's participation changes from being relatively peripheral to sometimes being responsible for managing the activities. In the case of Pema, he was expected to take responsible for ensuring that the pole-gate to the main house remained shut so that cows did not ransack their vegetable garden. While minding the gate he also ushered people in and out of the house during times when prayer ceremonies were taking place in the house. Pema's parents are very pious people therefore at least once a week they perform a religious ceremony in their house. During the ceremonies Pema's grandparents and father were the cooks in the kitchen while his mother performed the prayers along with the visitors. Hence in his home he observes that it is not always necessary for the mother to be in charge of the cooking, for it is always his father and granfather who cook during the ceremonies. Pema's father humorously comments: "I do not know the prayers like she does so I do the cooking for the group. I think the blessing will be the same as we are contributing to the same cause" (Tenzin, personal communication, January 8, 2012). Vygotsky asserts that the "development of the individual is a process in which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (1978, p. 88). Consequently, lessons of sharing responsibilities and of gender equity can be seen to form an important part of Pema's 'funds of knowledge'.

Running errands and listening to lengthy instructions are a part of most Bhutanese children's daily lives with their families and with others in the communities. For example, one day Sonam was outside and his mother shouted out to him, "*Alo*[63], you have nimble feet, so run and get me the hammer from the kitchen; it is in the box under the last shelf". After some time he brought her the correct hammer. Understanding and remembering lengthy instructions are

[63] My child!

a part of everyday life, although in schools and daycare centres, adults tend to regress and speak to children at a level below their zone of actual developed language. Fleer (2003) and Rogoff et al. (2003) believe that in communities where children are a part of everyday adult activities, models of adult language that are expected to be repeated to a third party, are a natural way of conversing.

Rogoff et al. (2003, p.183) asserts that in "communities where young children are involved in the mature activities of their family and community, children need not be drilled to prepare them for schooling of the real world". In these households the children were able to function well above their actual developmental levels for they were entrusted with serious tasks such as baby sitting, shopping and navigating a blind adult across the highway. They were able to carry out these challenging tasks naturally and efficiently in their everyday lives. Rogoff and her colleagues (2003) pointed out that this way of purposefully integrating children into the social sphere of work and community life provided a wholesome educational experience that is characteristic of learning in informal contexts. Consequently learning in these 'zones of comfort' with people who provided them with *confianza* (mutual trust) nurtured the children in a proper "cultural frame for adulthood" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 41).

Interdependence and reciprocity

Velez-lbanez (1988, p. 142) describe reciprocity as an "attempt to establish a social relationship on an enduring basis, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, the exchange expresses and symbolizes human social interdependence". The example of the 'Thuenpa Puen Zhi' in the earlier section is also an example of a relationship that is based on the foundation of 'interdependence and reciprocity' between the four animals and the tree.

The Planning Commission of Bhutan (1999) states:

> Our highly dispersed populations developed over centuries into tightly-knit and self-regulating communities, bound together by unwritten laws, practices and customs that governed kinship and community relations and the use of such shared resources as irrigation water and grazing land. Without this tradition of cooperation and compromise, communities would have been unable to cope with threats and adversity or, indeed, to have survived in the harsh conditions that characterize most parts of our nation. (PCoB, 1999, p 17)

Contrary to the concept of the "individual as an independent actor" (Rogoff, 2003, p.208), Bhutanese families generally emphasize the values of interdependence and reciprocity (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992; Gonzalez et al., 1993; Scrimsher & Tudge, 2003; Eberly et al., 2007) as the most important principle on which a harmonious social network is based. Our ancestors took care of each other in their own communities located in small pockets of the

country, cut off from the other communities by high mountains, torrential rivers and dense forests. This knowledge and practice is highly valued in the Buddhist religion as well as in the Bhutanese culture that we are trying to keep alive. Interdependence and reciprocity are values that are part of the variables for the GNH philosophy (Appendix D, p. 286).

For instance, when Pema's parents constructed their house in Paro some eight years ago, the government rules for the urban areas allowed only about 10 Indian labourers to work at one construction site; so constructions normally took a very long time. However, Pema's father managed to find many labourers from his own village, who made the long journey from the East to the West to help him construct his house. I was told later that Pema's family had given these villagers 'cash and kind' over the years as and when they were in need. Such reciprocal practices were based on *confianza* and honesty between the people as no written record of 'cash and kind' transactions were kept by either party. Bonds were forged over the long-term and they facilitated the exchange of resources and 'funds of knowledge' necessary for all involved. Pema's father always reminded his children about the importance of maintaining such relationships for he said, "We never know whose help we may require in the journey of our lives" (Tenzin, personal communication, January 2, 2012).

Figure 10.10 Getting ready for *Trema*

Pema's mother, Ngawang, on the other hand maintained a spiritual relationship of interdependence and reciprocity with others. She is well versed in performing a prayer called the *threma* and belongs to the *threma tshogpa*[64]. Therefore, when any '*keydug*'[65] befell any member of the *threma tshogpa*, they all come together to help in terms of materials, labour and prayers (Figure 10.10). Family knowledge and skills shared among family members and with the outside, became an essential component of the family economy (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011) and it symbolized human social interdependence (Velez-Ibanez, 1988, p. 142), which is

[64] A prayer group
[65] *Key* –happiness, *dug* -sadness

one of the main teachings of Lord Buddha. It is also one of the values that the country aspires to keep alive through the 'Educating for GNH' programs in the schools (Appendix D, pp.285-289). The GNH concept is very closely based on the teachings of Buddhism. The Bhutanese Buddhist scholar Phuntshok (2004, p. 483) in his paper on, "The role of Buddhism in achieving gross national happiness" wrote that, " Gross National Happiness cannot be achieved unless Buddhist philosophy is fully incorporated and practiced by each and every citizen of Bhutan".

In the village, Pema's *Meymey*[66] was known for travelling long distances with his horses and yaks to Sakten to barter grain for dairy products (Figure 10.11). He spent nights in the Saktenpa houses and they stayed with him when they descended from the mountains bringing their dairy products. Children were constantly exposed to relationships of reciprocity and interdependence on a daily basis; it was a part of how their communities survived and thrived. 'Educating for GNH' aspires to keep those relationships based on hospitality, generosity and sociability, perennial in the hearts of our younger generations.

Figure 10.11 *Memey* getting ready for Sakten

From my experience of being brought up in an urban area, I have observed that inculcating such values in our children is becoming increasingly challenging as the urban population becomes more and more individualistic. The NEF of Bhutan (REC, 2012a, p. 18) reinforces the concept that if we want to achieve GNH "we must each have concern for the welfare of the other living things that we are here sharing the world with".

Annual visits to the villages helped the families to maintain "social ties and allowed for an exchange of information to ensure that 'funds of knowledge' were constantly renewed and

[66] Grandpa in sherchop language

updated" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 323). Before the journey to their village, Nima's family collected a lot of clothes and other essential things that they could distribute in the village, where they are quite scarce. I too collected two bags of shoes and clothes for them. Nima's mother explained that the people in the village took care of her grandparents, their house and fields and that this was the least she could do. I initially thought a village visit would be like a holiday for the family; but this was not the case. Their eldest daughter explained to me how the whole family worked in the fields, both their own and those of their neighbours. The photographs that the family brought back were mostly of barley harvest, grinding grain and separating maize seeds from the cobs and religious gatherings. The children enjoyed the trip as it was made only once in a year and they met all their relatives and childhood friends (Figure 10.12).

Figure 10.12 Nima's family in Chedungkhar

After a ten-day stay, the family returned from the village with their grandparents. They sold the grain and the cows to the villagers. I assumed that they had returned much richer; however, this was not the case for they had sold the grain and cows on credit so that the villagers would continue to look after their fields and house and pay them half of the upcoming harvest during their next visit. This type of practice is very common among Bhutanese, especially in rural areas. Throughout her stay in the village Nima was an earnest participant in all the activities as can be seen from the photograph they brought back for me. Although not all interactions between adults and children were oriented to making children learn something, in most cases a certain "inclination towards pedagogical intent" was implicit in most situations (Van Manen, 1991).

As Sonam's father is an accountant in a bank, many of the villagers in his community, who could not read or write, sought his help in opening accounts and making deposits. The villagers trusted him with their account details and their money. They visited his house

occasionally to hand him cash and he would hand them the receipts for their earlier deposits and advise them to keep them in a safe place, so that if there was an accounting problem they could produce the evidence of having deposited money. The next time *Angay* had some work in the house or field, these same people were always willing to come and help. Through "thick multiple relationships", children become exposed to "multiple domains" in which 'funds of knowledge' were exchanged by the households (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 325).

Figure 10.13 A *puja* at Bishaka's house

For Bishaka, one of the regular activities through which she experienced reciprocal interdependence among family members, kin and friends was the weekly prayer ceremonies in their community (Figure 10.13). *Boju* was frequently required to supervise the food preparations for these occasions and when it was her turn to host the prayers, everyone came to help with cooking, cleaning and arranging the place. This constant exchange of support formed the "cultural glue" that held them harmoniously together (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 318). Bishaka once asked me, "Ma'am, are you coming to the *puja*[67], there will be so much *shelroties*[68] to eat" (Bishaka, personal communication, February 23, 2012). I was surprised because I never mentioned to her that I liked *shelroties*. It brought to mind Rogoff's (1990, p. 124) theory that children in such communities were able to observe and eavesdrop on the ongoing processes, for I was not aware of her when *Boju* and I had talked about *shelroties*. Correa-Chavez and Rogoff (2009) claim that children who grow up in a community, in which they are expected to attend ongoing events, observe them keenly even in situations when they are not directly addressed. Not only did such practices of 'third party' attention enable children to pick up wide range of family and community 'funds of knowledge', they became very useful learning skills in later life.

[67] Prayer ceremonies
[68] A kind of doughnut that Southern Bhutanese prepare for pujas.

The families made sure that they participated in the other families' social activities so that those families would, in turn participate in theirs. It was not just a work relationship it was about participation at all occasions for both good times and bad. It is a common practice in Sonam's community to invite people to come and eat with them for the whole day of the *Lochey*. To keep this reciprocal relationship alive, people need to ensure that they send at least one member from their family to attend the *Lochey. Angay* sometimes sent Sonam to represent the family at certain households when the *Lochey* took place. To have more people come and eat with a household was a matter of pride, particularly, in Sonam's community. Not only were such rituals a mechanism for maintaining social networks but they were also a means of "evaluating their social success" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 40). A household that did not normally have many guests would be seen as one that had failed to maintain a good relationship with others. It is not always during a crisis that this kind of networking is practised. *Angay* taught Sonam the importance of maintaining relationships based on interdependence and reciprocity throughout the ups and downs of life. She said, "What is the use of wasting so much energy and means to prepare *Lochey*, if you cannot share it with others" (Angay, personal communication, January 6, 2012).

This practice of social networking that connects them to their social environment and also facilitates development and exchange of resources enhances the households' ability to survive and thrive. These exchanges were so much a part of their life styles that people were hardly aware of them: they became a part of the, "implicit operational and cultural system" of their daily life (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 322). Throughout my time with the four families, I observed the adults portray to the children that "group membership" is far more essential and valued than being "an individual"(Fleer, 2003). Each time the families made exchanges with kinsmen, friends and neighbours, they encompassed not only many practical activities like constructions, rituals, *Locheys* and field work but they also constantly provided contexts in which learning could occur.

As emphasized by Fleer (2003),

Respect and concern

Bhutanese movies had their beginnings less than a decade ago and most of them had some cultural values and morals to teach. One such popular movie was the 'Cheypi bhu' (the loving son) that emphasized the importance and sacredness of the relationship between children and parents. The film made the Bhutanese viewers cry. It portrayed the sufferings that the 'loving so' goes through as a result of his unloving treatment of his parents who had sacrificed their youth, energy and means for him. In other words the son had not lived up to the Bhutanese

moral of, 'fa thang bhu gi tha damsti, lay jumdey' (The sacred relationship between a child and his parents).

Phuntshok (2004) wrote:

> Every Bhutanese citizen should educate himself or herself and work to develop the attitude of wanting to help others. The cultivation of an altruistic mind reflects the main activity of a bodhisattva and such mental attitudes are indispensable for generating happiness for the entire society. (Phuntshok, 2004, p.2)

The "belonging, being and becoming" (EYLF, 2009) of individuals; their 'identity, values and knowledge skills' (Wells, 2000) develop and make sense through their varied participation within the many 'ecological systems' (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) particularly, beginning with the child's 'meso-system'. For example, as they sat around the heater to eat their meals, Bishaka handed the food plates to *Boju* and *Bajay* and as she did so, folded her hands together and bowed as the elders took their plates. Bishka's comment on Figure 10.14 was, "Parents are like "*Bagwang*" (God) (Bishaka, personal communication, December 19, 2011) at which *Boju* smiled and added that how children treated their parents, their children would treat them in turn. This belief in "what goes around comes around", especially among family members, is firmly based on the teachings of both Hinduism and Buddhism. As with the Mexican children described by Knight et al. (1995) the notion of respect for others, especially elders, is highly valued in Bhutanese culture. These values are taught to children as a part of the Bhutanese social conduct and etiquette practices termed, '*driglam namzhag'*.

Figure 10.14 Gestures of respect

The 'Educating for GNH' encourages the schools to reinforce such values in the children whenever and wherever appropriate. Teachers are entrusted to be a role model for these values to children they teach. However, it is a pity that the teachers do not really have a way of knowing how much of these values are already a part of the child's 'virtual bag'. If they did, the teachers could consider this knowledge "as a resource for classroom instruction and

employ a strategy in which the 'funds of knowledge' is worked with to make it "pedagogically viable" (Moll, 2005, p. 277). Riojas-Cortez and Flores (2009, p. 187) comment that "being polite and considerate are pro-social behaviours demonstrating social understanding, which is the child's ability to ascertain other's feelings and intentions within a social context".

Every morning after prayers Bishaka received blessings for a successful and healthy life from her grandparents before all of them dispersed for the day. Bishaka has committed herself to take care of her grandparents; her mother once told me that, "She refuses to live with us in Haa, she tells us that we are young and can take care of ourselves, whereas *Boju* and *Bajay* need help" (Radha, personal communication, January 4, 2012). Every day Bishaka would run in and out of their small shop several times to perform errands for *Boju*. In the course of these actions she learnt many essential qualities of life such as concern for others, taking responsibility, negotiating prices of things, calculating money and treating customers with politeness. All of these actions provided the proper social engagement, which provided a suitable context for authentic and meaningful learning to take place.

Bishaka's concern for her parents impressed me. One day we looked at a photograph in which she was wearing a very pretty Indian dress that she called '*chow-bandhi choli'*, and she said she borrowed it from her cousin because she wanted to wear it. I suggested that she could ask her mother to bring her one from India, where she was soon going for a pilgrimage. With a sad face, Bishaka responded that she had already asked her mother to get her a bicycle and that her mother would not have enough money to buy the dress. Such mindful statement from a small girl brought tears to my eyes and put my suggestion to shame. Sadly, many children are now losing this quality of empathy and the schools are trying very hard to inculcate them through the GNH approach.

Figure 10.15. The *bukari*

Nima and her four siblings always participated keenly in the activities of the household through which they could contribute to the household economy, in order to lessen the demand on their father's earnings from which the rent, the loans and all other expenditures had to be met. During the two and a half months winter vacation, the three boys occasionally went to the forest to collect firewood to keep the house warm (Figure 10.15).

Yenda, the second oldest son said that, "buying hard wood is very expensive so we collect dead soft wood from the community forest" (Nyenda, personal communication, January 12, 2012). The village forest guard had explained to them why they should not chop down living trees. This was a case where the children had to make moral decisions whether to chop down the nearest tree or look for dead and burnt remains of logs to bring home and it provided the children the chance to make appropriate decisions based on logics taught in school; for example 'conservation and preservation of forest', which is one of the pillars of the GNH philosophy. Although Nima is too small to accompany her brothers to the forest she knows that they have to forage for the firewood that warms the house as they sit around the *bukari* every night. One evening I sat with Nima's family around their *bukari* and expressed a need for firewood for my *bukari.* I then asked Nima's mother where they bought their wood and it was Nima who proudly replied that her brothers collected it from the forest. As we chatted about the costs of buying wood, she sat on her mother's lap and listened. Acts of resourcefulness by her siblings are untaught lessons that Nima will remember and use when required. This is a prime example of the kind of learning that occur from 'embeddedness' in her life at home and in the community. Fleer and Williams-Kennedy (2002) assert that 'embeddedness' would provide a much richer and more meaningful experience to a child than would 'child-centeredness' which is a reified term that schools use as their hallmark in preparing children to become more individualistic.

Whenever I asked the children why they wanted to study, the usual response was that, "We want to look after our parents because they have done the same for us*"*. Nima was prompted by her elder sister to give the same response when I asked her this question. I further teased her by asking why she wanted to serve her parents; she then smiled and shrugged her shoulders. Although, at the present moment, she may not understand the depth of what she was repeating after her sister, the essence of '*fa thang bhu gi tha damsti, lay jumdey'* would slowly sink in as she lived each day of her life embedded in her extended family. Moreover, moral values get talked about casually in the kitchen while cooking, in the gardens while planting potatoes or outside while washing clothes in the sun.

I met Sonam in his apple orchard, trying to conceal something behind his back. I went close to him and asked conspiratorially what he was hiding. He was hiding a new toy car for he said that *Angay* did not approve of his father wasting money on toys. Once we entered the house, he swiftly shoved the toy under one of the shelves. He did not want his grandmother to be annoyed with his father. I was impressed by his thoughtfulness in not wanting to upset his grandmother and at the same time protect his father from her complaints of unnecessary spending. His thoughts resembled those of an adult for he could evaluate, judge and manage situations, and behave in a manner that was best suited for the moment. Smart thinking and behavior are skills that cannot be taught in a classroom.

Figure 10.16 Sonam and Yoeser - helping *Angay*

Sonam and his little brother always hovered around *Angay* and helped her in many small ways. One day as *Angay* sat on the ground on a mat and chopped pumpkins for her fourteen cows, the two boys carried the pumpkins closer to her so that she did not have to get up to get them from under the cowshed. The younger boy dropped one of the pumpkins and it rolled under the fence, into the stream; he looked at *Angay* and his brother fearing a rebuke for his carelessness. *Angay* looked at him, smiled and teased, "I have the two best grandsons in the whole world; I wouldn't know what to do without them". After hearing this, the boys brought so many pumpkins that *Angay* had to stop them by saying she had more than enough for that day (Figure 10.16). Her encouragement, patience, and tolerance of error boosted the children's genuine desire to help and to be interested in learning things through trial and error within a zone of comfort and care.

The only 'funds of knowledge' that the children could take out of their '"virtual bags"' in school were the courteous words and gestures that they had been taught at home. At home the children always responded to their parents and to me with, *'la'* or '*hajur'*, which are formal

and respectful forms of responses in *Dzongkha* and *Lhotsampakha*[69] respectively. They would offer tea, food or any other things with both their hands, as a sign of respect. If they forgot the parents would remind them on the spot to repeat the word or the gesture. One day, Bishaka and her four-year-old cousin accompanied me to have some dumplings in a restaurant. The boy wanted to drink water, so I told him to ask the waiter for a glass, as the water jar was already on the table. Bishaka shouted after him, "Raju, remember to address her as *didi*". *Didi* in *Lotsampahka* meant elder sister, which is a more respectful way of addressing someone older than oneself.

The concern and respect that the children showed for their parents were strongly based on the philosophy of '*fa thang bhu gi tha damsti, lay jumdey'* so that children will not suffer in their later life, as did the '*chepey bhu*' in the movie. Values related to such philosophy are enshrined in the *Dzongkha* readers of the schools, but they sometimes fail to get across to children, as their teachers focus more on the 'readings of the words' rather than the 'reading of the world' (Freire, 1998). On a similar note the National Educational Framework of Bhutan (REC, 2012a, p. 54) states, "In regards to value, textbooks are designed to exercise declarative memory rather than reasoning and working memory". However, through the 'Educating for GNH' movement, values like concern and respect are now, recommended to be practiced more prominently in the schools. As suggested by Lave and Wenger (1991) the process of inculcating such values could be done much more meaningfully if there was an awareness of the appropriated values, skills and knowledge that the child had gleaned from his/her participation with the members of the household and the relevant community.

Faith and destiny

There is a very popular Bhutanese folk tale that is a part of the Dzongkha reading texts in the primary schools. A mother asked her son to bring her a relic from his pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya in India, so that she could pray to it for the rest of her life. While returning, the son forgot the request, thus in desperation he pulled out a tooth from a dead dog, cleaned it wrapped it in silk and told his mother that he brought back a holy relic. His mother was so overwhelmed with happiness and reverence; she put the tooth on the altar and prayed and prostrated to it every day. One day she unfolded the silk to clean the tooth and to her amazement and joy she saw the image of Lord Buddha carved on the tooth.

Brown et al. (1989, p. 37) declare that "activities of a domain are framed by its culture and that such meaningful, purposeful and coherent activities are authentic" and learning based in such authentic situations is both useful and essential. Except for Bishaka's family, who are

[69] The Southern Bhutanese language

Hindu, the other three families are all Buddhists. The names of some of the gods and the prayers in the Hindu religion may differ from those in Buddhism but the philosophies of life, of *karma* and of destiny are similar. Bishaka and her grandparents are very pious people. On my first day with them, *Boju* briefly showed me her altar and introduced me to the different gods and *gurus*[70] from whom she had learnt the prayers and philosophies of life that she intended to pass down to her children.

Figure 10.17 Bishaka's daily prayer routines

For Bishaka, *Boju* was her *guru*; she had learnt her prayers and philosophies of life from *Boju*. There are many rituals and practices that Bishaka carries out on a daily basis under the supervision of *Boju* and *Bajay* (Figure 10.17). One day as we sat on the poles lying outside their shop, Bishaka chanted a prayer to Lord Shiva, with constant prompts from her grandmother and at the end of the prayer *Boju* patted her head proudly and lovingly. I thought that memorizing prayers orally chanted by *Boju* would enhance Bishaka's power of retention, as it did for me as a small girl. Such skills would serve her well in her schooling process where, even today, many things have to be memorized.

Phuntshok (2004, p. 3) said, "If Bhutan wants to give birth to a GNH state, both the economic and spiritual spheres need to be developed together, but the spiritual aspect is the base from which to start". *Boju* had endured few severe calamities in her life such as fires twice gutting her daughter's shop in Bumthang, and the demise of her husband and eldest son at quite young ages. Her narration of the sudden death of her son brought tears to my eyes, but not to *Boju*'s, who said that:

> We all are born to die someday although my son was called a bit too soon. Maybe this is what has been written in our "*bagia*[71]", both my son's and mine. We might not have been able to accumulate enough good karma in our previous life to be able to live

[70] Spiritual teachers in Lhotsampa language
[71] Destiny in Lhotsampa language

> together for long. I pray that I get to meet my son in the next life in the same relationship. (*Boju*, personal communication, December, 14, 2011)

Boju's strong religious conviction gave her hope even in a situation that to me seemed hopeless. Sanchez (1999, p. 356) rightly states that, "listening to someone else's story encourages reflection and rethinking of our own stories and it is in the reexamination of our own stories that we experience the greatest learning". I explained to *Boju* how I could not come to terms with god after the death of my father and she had a lot of comforting advice and wisdom to share with me regarding the power of faith. Bishaka is accustomed to listening to this kind of spiritual philosophy from her grandparents and this will help to shape the kind of person that she will become when she grows up. These philosophies of life may be a little ahead of her development and sometimes she might not understand them completely; however, with the constant "appropriate scaffolding" (Vygotsky, 1997, p.55) provided by them, she will one day fully understand and live life according to these philosophies. From this perspective, who a person becomes critically depends on his or her upbringing and the kind of assistance received from the others.

Pema's parents share the same faith and belief in destiny as *Boju* and while talking about their expectations for their children's future, Pema's father says:

> There is no point of wishing for lots of things for our children, of course every parent desires the best for their children, however, it does not work that way. It all depends on their fate, whether they would live like a king or a beggar will be a result of their earlier life. (Tenzin, personal communication, January 8, 2012)

Even Nima and Sonam's parents shared the same kind of feelings about their children's future. At a time when modernization and stress are making inroads into Bhutanese society, this kind of outlook on life can help ease the anxiety of the unexpected. Their strong faith in their religious practices and in the *karmic* cycle could help to stabilize their unwanted emotions and keep them calm. This calm is in itself like meditation for mindfulness, something that the schools try so hard to instill in children. An interesting observation was that, whatever happened in the family, whether for good or for bad, it was always concluded as happening due to the family's *karma*; it was always a collective thing, and no single person was blamed for being the unfortunate one. Phuntshok illustrated the meaning of *karma* through an historical anecdote in his article titled "On GNH and Buddhism":

> An 8th century Tibetan king named Muni Tsenpo felt sympathy for his poor subjects and he wanted to make them happy by giving them an equal amount of wealth. Three times in his reign he redistributed property, but poor subjects remained as poor as before and wealthy subjects as wealthy as before. Finally the king accepted that karma

> was very powerful and that people had to accept their karma and apply their efforts accordingly. (Phuntshok, 2004, p. 487)

Children learn the importance of the team spirit of unity of interdependence, where success and failure are considered a shared event in these religious practices at home (Figure 10.18). Yet this philosophy is contrary to the test of individual success and failure in the schools.

Figure **10.18 The religious ceremonies in the different families**

I had previously been unaware of the fact that within one religion, namely Buddhism, practices could be so different. Nima's mother put it well by commenting that, "they were different roads leading to the same destination" (Yangzom, personal communication, 14th February, 2012). These notions teach children to be accepting of other cultures and ethnicities. Acceptance of diversity is one of the values to be inculcated in children under the 'Educating for GNH' programs in the schools. The ceremonies that Nima's family performed in their village for sick people differed in details from the ones that Pema's father carried out for the same purpose.

I was dumbstruck by the description of the village medicine man using a sword to hit Nima's mother to cure her of problems with urinary tract infection. Call it the power of faith or a mere coincidence that she recovered in a couple of days. There is a common saying in Bhutan, that 'faith can do wonder'. However, that faith in local practices if not passed down the line, can vanish totally. The 10th five-year plan (GNH Commission of Bhutan, 2009) for the country states:

> While development is being ushered in, by far the most ambitious national goal is that of cultural preservation. While globally, life styles may be imploding or converging rather than diversifying, traditional values get relativised, recomposed or submerged under the weight of the global culture. The diffusion of trans-national culture can set in motion forces of silent dissolution of local languages, knowledge, beliefs, customs, trades, institutions and communities. Assimilating these changes without losing the

> country's unique culture and identity is one of the main challenges facing the country today. (GNH Commission of Bhutan, 2009, Vol. 1, p. 28)

These kinds of traditional and indigenous micro-cultures that are dynamic and not static and uniform (Gonzalez et al., 1993) have served people well over the decades. However, these same practices are some of the most vulnerable as a country modernizes. Through 'Educating for GNH' Bhutan is trying hard to keep alive practices that are useful and meaningful to communities, especially, when they address core values, for instance, "respect and appreciation for belief system and cultural diversity" (MoE, Bhutan, 2010c, p. 31). Wells (2000, p. 3) claims, "Human development is immeasurably enriched and extended through the individual's appropriation and mastery of the cultural inheritance, as this is encountered in activity and interaction with others".

Families economized on many things in their lives in order to save money for religious ceremonies and donations. *Boju* sent money annually to her *guru* in India, because he prayed for the good health of her family. During my time with them, Pema's mother spent about a week working at the cremation site of her *rimpoche*[72]; cleaning offering bowls and filling thousands of butter lamps for the departed soul of the *rimpoche*. Although Nima's mother always complained about how difficult it was to make ends meet with five children to look after, she always put some money aside to donate to the *terda*[73]. The *terda* performed rituals for the good health and prosperity of Nima's family. In all these activities, there is a spiritual relationship of 'interdependence and reciprocity' between the members. In such spiritual networks, children are a vital part. Adults make it a point to include their children in the ritual and ceremonies so that they can have confidence in their faith and in the practices that have served their parents well. It is rightly said by Phuntshok (2004) that the power of their beliefs nurtures the psychological state of their minds to a higher level of tranquility, serenity and the stress free zone of living that is desired by all sentient beings.

Education

I grew up reading so many stories in the Dzongkha readers in school, about the value of education and knowledge. One such story was about a rich boy and an educated poor boy who went for a business trip together. The rich boy had so many gold coins to carry and the poor boy just had knowledge. The two of them slept under a tree for the night. Unfortunately, robbers attacked them, and the rich boy refused to hand over the gold so he was beaten and his gold taken away. However, they did nothing to the poor boy, as he had nothing to be robbed. For the rest of the journey, the rich boy depended on the knowledge and wisdom of

[72] A Buddhist religious teacher
[73] A medicine man

the poor boy for his survival. At the end of the story as usual there was this moral punch line 'Sersung jalay yonten nachi ga' (A piece of knowledge is better than a hundred gold coins).

Figure 10.19 Getting ready for school

The NEF of Bhutan (REC, Bhutan, 2012a, p. 29) document affirms that the major factor contributing to the proliferation of schools and the upsurge in enrolments in those schools has been the increased awareness of the value of education by the people of Bhutan. My time with the four families proved this to be true. The primary responsibility for the families in this study was to educate their children at all cost. These aspirations were contradictory to the 'deficit views' held by teachers of many such families, particularly the uneducated ones, as not being interested in their children's education. This attitude was expressed on numerous occasions during the FG discussions. The families did not know much about how the "school system functions" or how to "interact confidently and competently with the teachers" (Moll, 2005, p. 280) so they consciously kept a distance between themselves and the school. On the other hand the teachers confess that they do not have the time to visit the homes to see the families in person.

While looking through the many beautiful photographs of Gomdhar, I wondered why Nima's parents moved to Paro. I was later told that if they continued living in the village the children would not have had access to education as the nearest school was about a six-hour- walk away. After having enrolled all her children in school, Nima's parents still worried that some of them might not be able to finish their schooling. Nima's mother confided in me that she had fulfilled her duty as a parent by enrolling them all in schools, but it had been with much difficulty and she felt that her children did not seem to be making good progress in their studies. Therefore, from what remained of the money that her husband earned, she paid two trainee teachers to tutor her four older children after school. Very anxiously she added that her children do not realize how embarrassing and handicapped one felt when not educated. She

also said, “I cannot even read the time on the bus ticket” (Yangzom, personal communication, February 6, 2012). Zipin (2009, p. 317) comments that, “a justice-oriented strategy then is to design curriculum that makes meaningful connection with ways of knowing in learners’ lives beyond school”. I thought she was right to expect the schools to educate her children to survive in the reality of the day-to-day world besides teaching them how to read and write.

Pema’s parents were literate in both *Dzongkha* and English and they placed great emphasis on their children’s education. Their children’s rooms had study tables, chairs, books, and educational charts of alphabets, multiplication tables, vegetables and fruits. In the evenings, Tenzin taught his nine-year-old daughter how to use a laptop and his seven-year-old son taught his brother Pema how to write the alphabets of both *Dzongkha* and English. A traditionally held belief has been that the home-based learning rituals have a positive effect on school success and parents who were not following such practices were viewed as high risk for failure. Most Bhutanese parents try and engage in academic preparations in the home. When I gave a set of drawing books, coloured pencils, erasers and sharpeners to each of the four children they used them more for writing alphabets and numbers than for actually drawing.

Pema’s father expressed his concerns about the dearth of government jobs in the country; he wondered what the situation would be like for Pema in about sixteen years’ time. All parents vie for a secure government job for their children. After a pause he added that, “Job or no job, completion of education is a must. If you are educated you can always find a way to survive” (Tenzin, personal communication, January 8, 2012). Completion of education for Pema was not an option it was the goal of his family. His parents would put all their efforts and aspirations into achieving this goal and the same would be expected of Pema. I can vouch that this is a common phenomena among all Bhutanese parents and their children.

Bishaka’s parents had dropped out of school due to unfavorable situations. Because of this her mother, Radha, was determined to make sure that nothing obstructed the completion of her daughter’s education. At the same time Radha, herself wanted to pursue Continuous Education (CE) and try to get a teaching job, about which *Boju* remarked, “I want Radha to at least complete her year 12 and then get into the teacher training. For that even if I have to take a loan, I will” (*Boju*, personal communication, January 31, 2012). *Boju* repeatedly shared her regret of not having continued her education when she had the opportunity, firstly because some of her former classmates were now teachers, and secondly, because she could not read

the prayer books. In a tone of utmost determination she said, "I want Bishaka to study well, not because I want to live off her earnings but because I want her to be able to take care of herself. I cannot help wishing this although I know it all depends on her karma" (*Boju*, personal communication, December 14, 2011). The philosophy of *karma* is a great moderator that helps the households to be more accepting of what life has to offer and at the same time to do the best they can.

In the house of Sonam's *Angay*, the discussion about education was of a different kind. In every house there was a sense of anxiety about the scarcity of jobs in the country. I was in the house with *Angay* and some guests. The conversation was about the year 12 exams and one of the guests commented on the uselessness of studying when there were no jobs left in the country. He gave as an example earlier days when a person who just studied Class One could become an army officer. Then *Angay* added that her own niece who had graduated last year was still looking for a job. She also said that:

> We cannot just leave the children out of school. It is our responsibility to educate them. What they will achieve in life is totally dependent on their destiny. It is quite desperate when you are not literate – look, my children gave me a mobile that I cannot use if Sonam is not around. Being educated has become a necessity for survival. (*Angay*, personal communication, December 19, 2011).

Therefore, in all the families there was a strong sense of urgency to get their children educated, although they are aware of the fact that chances of getting jobs in the future were bleak. They considered education and knowledge to be essential ingredients for obtaining a better life; educating their children had to take place without any compromise.

Play and improvisation

When a parent faces difficulties managing a child, a familiar and always workable way out is by saying, "See Jojo will make you a toy, go to Jojo" and the child runs into Jojo's lap; Jojo then takes the child outside the house and says more to himself, "Well, what shall I make for you". He reaches out his hands to the hanging willows and pulls a branch, as the child watches curiously, Jojo weaves the willow into a wreath and places it on the child's head and says, "See, you are now a Woochup". The child happily carries the wreath on his head and then asks, "Jojo what is a Woochup?" Jojo takes a long breath and then sits down somewhere comfortable and says, "Well Woochups are ……

It is through this kind of interaction between the old and the young that many important lessons of historical, cultural and moral values are passed down through generations. It is a common sight in the community where Sonam lives, of adults sitting in the fields looking after the cows or watching over grain spread out in the sun, whilst at the same time attempting to engage a child or two by designing something for them to play with, from whatever

materials are available. As the adult bends his head over the making of the toy, interesting stories related to the situation are narrated and the children watch and listen with immense patience and interest (Figure 10.20). In most rural areas the buying of toys is either not possible or affordable and most adults are very resourceful in creating improvised toys for their children. Ball (2012, p. 16) notes that facilitators in schools and early learning centers "could benefit from additional education on how to engage children and older family members in gathering natural materials, and on how to recycle household objects to create interesting learning materials".

Figure 10.20 Observing adults making toys

Vygotsky (1978) describes play, particularly socio-dramatic play as an essential and crucial activity that fosters development in children, especially, at the preschool and kindergarten stages. Through such play, children portray their understanding of "real life behaviors in their specific cultural contexts" (Hedges & Cullen, 2011, p. 4). One day I met Sonam in their apple orchard collecting maize cobs, I teasingly commented, "Oh my god, how many maize heads you've eaten?" he looked at me seriously and replied, "they are not maize they are *kurus*. Then he ran inside to get his camera and showed me a photograph in which he was holding an armful of maize cobs with feathers stuck into one end, and short sharpened sticks in the other - darts known as *kurus* in *Dzongkha*. His eldest uncle had made them in the past, and now he could make them for his younger brother. This is a demonstration of the idea that a child's association of different meanings to an object during play can cater to the child's creativity and development of abstract ideas and thinking.

Another time Sonam was rolling a circular polythene pipe with a strip of aluminum wire that an uncle had designed for him from scrap materials around the house. Sonam called it a 'cycle'. He showed me how he could roll the cycle but after a few rounds the joint came apart and he was left with a long piece of pipe. His cousin's grandfather was talking with *Angay*

and saw Sonam's cycle disintegrate; he immediately picked it up as he kept on talking with *Angay.* He drew a dagger from his belt and shaved a few thin layers off the piece of wood that was stuck in one end of the pipe and then pushed the two ends of the pipe together over the wood and handed it back to Sonam who all the while had been watching him with keen interest. I felt that the next time the circle of pipe came apart, Sonam would imitate the old man's actions for imitation is not just mechanical copying of behaviors, but something that could occur as and when the child needed it in meaningful situations (Hedges & Cullen, 2011).

Figure 10.21 Sharing improvised toys

Occasionally, Wangchuk a small boy from the adjacent village, came to play with Sonam, he brought his own small improvised bamboo bow and arrow that his *Jojo* had made for him, and sometimes the two boys swapped their toys and taught each other how to use them as each seemed to be an expert with their own toys (Figure 10.21). Thus, they learnt from each other and "what they managed to do in cooperation today, they could do individually tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 188). It is not always necessary for someone to learn from an expert as, "participants with relatively little expertise can learn with and from each other as well as from those with greater experience" (Wells, 2000, p. 4). Wangchuk and Sonam actively directed their own learning through self-initiation and self-regulation. By contrast, classroom activities are mostly teacher regulated so that "teachers can verify whether learning is taking or taken place" Nunes (1999, p. 48). Bodrova and Leong (2007, p.162) define "self-regulation" as a skill that a child can voluntarily perform with or without an adult present.

Figure 10.22 Nima and her favorite past times

Socio-dramatic play can never be an "activity without purpose" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 103) for it exhibits what "the children know and are capable of doing" (Riojas-Cortez, 2001, p. 35). In other words socio-dramatic play portrays the child's 'funds of knowledge'. During one of my visits, I could not meet Nima, so later I asked where she had been; she had accompanied a friend to the Indian Military Camp to collect *barakoties*[74] because they threw out a lot of tins and bottles. She dragged a gunny bag from under the bed and showed me her collection of tins and containers that she used for her cooking play. One day I observed Nima with her *barakoties* (Figure 10.22). With sweat rolling down her face she enacted the role of a housewife while the neighbor's son pretended to be the father of the house. She cooked for him; stirred the curry several times with a piece of flat stick and pretended to taste the salt. She picked up her handbag, which contained a broken mobile, a lipstick and some pieces of paper to represent money. She applied some lipstick to her lips, swung the bag over her shoulder and explained that she was going vegetable shopping before walking to the kitchen garden at the back of the house to cut some leek to be added to her cooking. I thought how true it was that in play a child was always a head taller than her/his current self for she became the character that she was playing. Both Vygotsky and Piaget recognized play as a purposeful activity that promoted the development of both mental and social abilities in children. When she was role-playing, Nima always took charge and her language, too, sounded more like that of an adult as she demonstrated her annoyance to her 'husband' for arriving late and scolded him by saying: "See, I told you several times to come and eat and now I have to warm the food again".

[74] Normally referred to miniature pots, pans, crockery etc. for cooking games in Lotshampa language. However, in this case they were looking for containers to use as crockery.

Figure 10.23 Bishaka's play group

Bishaka had a lot of friends with whom to play (Figure 10.23) *barakoti* and a lot more containers to use too, as they lived in the town and could scavenge for them behind the shops.

Their group contained older children of between six and seven years, with the result that their play was more elaborate than Nima's. Riojas-Cortez (2001, p. 35) states that children display their culture through their socio-dramatic play episodes; for instance, Nima served the make-believe food on a plate and gave it to her friend whereas Bishaka and her friends first put all the make-believe food equally onto a number of plates and then individuals picked up any one of the plates which is typical of the Southern Bhutanese culture.

One of their favourite games was enacting 'teacher-student'. Children taking the role of a teacher interestingly portray how he or she perceives his or her real teacher to be. The eldest one among them, who was in grade one, was always the teacher. She carried a long stick in one hand and a book in the other, and occasionally sat on a high chair while the students sat on the poles on the ground in a line. I thought this must be how the children perceived schooling. It was interesting to observe that during this enactment the teacher could tell them anything or sometimes swing her stick at them and they would still pay attention to her instructions. There were some small boys in the group who in reality were usually unmanageable. Yet, during the school emulation they became the most adorable students. They would stand up straight with their hands at their sides and answer questions asked by the teacher, all the time remembering to use honorific forms of address. Bishaka, was the second oldest in the group and she maintained class order by naming herself the "class captain". In these activities, children portrayed clear understanding of discipline and order that we call "*driglam namsha*" (social conduct) that are mandatory and are an important part of the 'Educating for GNH' practices in the schools.

From a socio-cultural perspective pretend play gave the children the opportunity to hone the social skills of the adult world. They practiced the roles of what they could become, a corollary to what Vygotsky (1986, p.188) has described as "earning preceding and making way for development to follow". Vygotsky (1978, p.102) compared play to a magnifying glass, stating that "play contained all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and was itself a major source of development".

It is obvious that children exhibit their 'funds of knowledge' through their socio-dramatic forms of plays. It is self evident that if schools allotted a time for activities of this nature and if teachers took the time to observe them, they could gain rich insights into what the children know; what they are capable of doing and where they come from. These insights would prove to be a very useful resource for their teaching (Riojas-Cortez, 2001, p. 39) and would be an ideal means of getting to know the children and their families better.

Conclusion

The Planning Commission of Bhutan (1999) states that:

> Embodying our Buddhist culture and values, our society is one in which the wisdom and experience that comes with spiritual development and old age are held in high esteem, children occupy a special place in our affections, respect for parents is considered normal, and men and women stand as equals before the law. These qualities form part of the social cement that binds us together and, although we tend to take them for granted, their value as a tangible development asset is most clearly in evidence in the many cases elsewhere in the world where they are much less abundant. (PCoB, 1999, p. 17)

On a similar note Rios-Aguilar et al. (2011, p. 170) claim that the most powerful strength of a 'funds of knowledge' approach is the recognition of the values and resources embedded in students, families and communities which could not only curb the deficit perspectives but could be also used for pedagogical actions. Unlike learning in the classrooms, learning in the households is more often initiated by the children based on their own interest and curiosity.

A large percentage of Bhutanese, practice traditional ways of caring for children as most parents cannot afford, nor have access to the early learning centres in their community. Consequently, most Bhutanese children still have a chance to learn in a "zone of comfort" that supports resilience, confidence, willingness and ability to problem-solve. But the recognition of household 'funds of knowledge', especially by the teachers and educators, is a necessity for providing culturally appropriate care and education to the children. Appreciation of these local 'funds of knowledge', will not only lessen the dichotomy between the school and the families but would also make 'Educating for GNH' much more meaningful. Children are

already living the many variables that are envisioned in the GNH philosophy. Through their intent participation in the community of practice, the children's 'funds of knowledge' that Vygotsky (1987) terms as the "everyday concepts", gradually develop through their rich and varied everyday experiences and form a strong foundation upon which to build the "scientific concepts" they encounter in later schooling. What each child then becomes is an image of the social interactions that he or she has experienced with others. Through a community of practice the children experience learning of an informal kind that Paradise and Rogoff (2009, p. 132) describe as "panhuman age-old socio-cultural practice that has evolved culturally across millennia and is well suited for human learning of all kinds". Children bring rich experiences from their home and these experiences could be harnessed in the schools as they attempt to educate for GNH. To what extent this is happening in the schools, forms the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 11

The living creature is a part of the world, sharing its vicissitudes and fortunes, and making itself secure in its precarious dependence only as it intellectually identifies itself with the changes about it, and, forecasting the future consequences of what is going on, shapes its own activities accordingly. If the living, experiencing being is an intimate participant in the activities of the world to which it belongs, then knowledge is a mode of participation, valuable in the degree in which it is effective. It cannot be the idle view of an unconcerned spectator. (Dewey, 1916, p. 393)

THE SCHOOL 'FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE'

Introduction

Chapter 10 was an illustration of the rich 'funds of knowledge' experienced by the four families in both their households and communities. Just like the household 'funds of knowledge' the school, too, has its own repositories of knowledge, skills and practices that have been accumulated both historically and culturally over the years, and are followed diligently without questions. What I have chosen to call the school 'funds of knowledge' some people refer to as 'school culture'. The document 'Education without Compromise' (ESRCoB, 2008) describes school culture as:

> What counts as normal at a school. There is more to this definition than first meets the eye. When something counts as normal, it means that it is sanctioned, officially or unofficially, by the institution. It is something – a practice, a value, a point of view – that is so embedded in an organisation that its presence is barely noticed or seen as out of the ordinary. It is the set of practices that a new member to the school will likely conform to after six months on the job. They may enter with a different set of beliefs or practices, (perhaps fresh from teacher training) but they will be overpowered by the culture. (ESRCoB, 2008, p. 35)

My interpretations of what I experienced in the homes and the community strengthened an awareness of how essential it was to be cognisant of the home and the community 'funds of knowledge'. However, without addressing the 'funds of knowledge' of the school, this study cannot be complete and comprehensive. As illustrated in chapter 10, their household culture provided the children and the families with the zone of comfort that Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) and Moll and Greenberg (1990) describe as an environment of *confianza* where children work, play and live with people whom they trust. In the transition from the zone of comfort to the zone of the school, the children and their families are very likely to experience some discontinuities (Ogbu, 1982; Tyler et al., 2008).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, culturally, for a Bhutanese, getting the beginning right is considered a very important omen for later success. Bhutanese believe in the saying, '*Gu tashin, ju dhendup'* meaning, 'if the beginning went off well, the end will follow suit'. Children are made aware of the importance of such practices and beliefs from a very early

age. For instance, on the morning of the PP interview, Bishaka and her family spent more time than usual at their altar to pray for a smooth day. Sonam's mother took him to the third floor of his grandmother's house to make him prostrate and say a prayer for a good day. From being with these families I understood how important events such as the PP interview, the first assembly and the first days in the PP classroom were for them, and the efforts that they put into their preparations. If the school personnel too were more aware of the importance of for the children and their families, this would not only set a positive tone to the day but also comply with the principles of the 'Educating for GNH' philosophy by helping to make families feel comfortable and welcomed in the school. But, for the school, with its own reified norms and practices, empathy sometimes can take second place.

This chapter will attempt to delve deeper into some of the norms and practices of the school that I observed along with the families and their children. The intention is to analyse how these norms and practices could have been different if the school system had a way of experiencing and understanding the local 'funds of knowledge' of the children and their families, which in turn could aid in realigning the resources available for teaching and learning (Moll et al., 1992; Gonzalez et al., 1993; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1993). Drawing from my data bank and the theoretical framework of 'funds of knowledge', this chapter discusses four main themes that are significant to this inquiry. These themes ensued from the perspective that an awareness of the children and their families' 'funds of knowledge' could create many rich 'zones of possibilities' allowing the interaction patterns, participation structures, curriculum content and classroom practices to more closely match the diverse backgrounds and strengths of students (Cairney, 2000). Specifically there should be possibilities to:

- foster inclusive and responsive zones of practices in PP education;
- refute the deficit views of children and parents;
- empower home-school relationships and
- change perspectives and practices of PP educators.

The rest of this chapter discusses each of the four 'zones of possibilities' in the context of the norms and practices of PP education in one district in Bhutan. The purpose of this analysis is not to find faults but to identify some of the gaps that a 'fund of knowledge' approach can fill in order to foster more inclusive and responsive practices.

Foster inclusive and responsive zones of practices in PP education

The NEF of Bhutan (REC, Bhutan 2012, p. 73) defines inclusive as "a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to and within the learning environment". The 'Educating for GNH' (MoE, Bhutan, 2010c) document recommends that all schools should practice inclusiveness in all aspects and that the teachers should be culturally sensitive, farsighted and responsive. In this section, the term 'inclusive' refers more to accommodating the diverse 'funds of knowledge' of all learners and their families in the education process through a much more responsive and mindful manner, which will create meaningful 'zones of practices' between the families and the school. Many scholars discussed this concept of a 'zone of practice' and they described it with differing terminologies such as "contextualization (Callanan et al., 2001); the "third space" (Moje et al., 2004); and a "double move" (Hedegard, 1998). Other scholars address this zone as a confluence of the planned curriculum and the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1991, in Pinar & Irwin (Ed.), 2005); the "reading of the word" and the "reading of the world" (Freire, 1998); and the "schooled concepts" and the "everyday concept" (Vygotsky, 1987). To have a meaningful impact this zone has to be grounded in the bond between the in-school and the out-of-school 'funds of knowledge'. Only then can it be capable of maximizing the children's learning opportunities and creating a sense of belonging that is a result of their home culture not being alienated from that of the school culture (Gillard & Moore, 2007).

This section of the chapter draws on the 'funds of knowledge' notion; that households have historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills that could provide very strategic resources for classroom practices. Van Manen (1991) explains that a technological approach to education assumes that teaching can be accomplished by generalizations and general techniques. Lately it has been recognized that education can make more sense if it is connected to experiences, after all as expressed by Alexander (2008) that it is children we teach, not subjects. Such notions provided the lens through which I could clearly see the many possibilities of creating improved 'zones of practices' in what took place at the school. My experiences as a participant-observer in the homes and the school for four months brought to my attention the opportunities that exist where an awareness of the 'funds of knowledge' of the children and their families, could foster inclusive and responsive practices to make the induction of the PP children and their families to their first year in school more satisfying.

In this section I draw from my own experience as well as those of the children and their families in dealing with two of the most significant events facing them, namely the PP interview and the first days in the school. From those, I have chosen to focus on the ones that I believe has the greatest possibility of providing positive change in the future.

The PP Interview

Figure 11.1 The PP Interview

The PP interview is an important event that formally summons the children and their families to the school for the first time. It is a time during which both children and parents develop their first impressions of the school, the teachers and about learning in general. Locally this day is known as the 'PP interview' and is taken as seriously as one might a job interview. It shares the same seriousness of mood and process. It is a generally accepted fact that a child's first encounter with school can have a strong impact on his or her disposition towards school and all subsequent school experiences. Galindo and Sheldon (2012) confirm that this initial experience can also have an impact on whether a child will successfully complete his or her schooling. In light of this it would seem prudent that these important initial experiences be "welcoming and inclusive" (Christenson, 2003, p. 471). However, on the cold morning of the PP interview:

Most of the children and the parents in the school courtyard looked subdued and I was unsure if it was the stress of the day or the weather that was responsible for this mood. Children sat on their parents' laps and together they anxiously watched the veranda on the second floor of the administrative building in the school for any signs of the interview beginning. After about an hour, the parents were asked to give their children all the required documents such as their birth certificates, their parents' national citizenship cards and some passport photos, and to then send the children upstairs alone to the office door. The teachers then lined the children up in accordance with the list of names held by the school. They also ensured that the children stood in line and made no noise. (PP Interview, 10th December 2011)

Although it seems obvious that including parents in the initial stages of a child's transition into school is likely to help the child develop a positive feeling about schooling (Fabian &

Dunlop, 2002, 2007; Brooker, 2002, 2008; Dockett & Perry, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006), the school chose to separate the parents from the children for the morning of the interview, for that was the traditional practice. This seems to confirm the conviction that sometimes it seems impossible to break free of the "rhetoric of the profession" (Fleer, 2003, p. 64). The school has particular ways of doing things that had been ingrained over time and neither the teachers nor the parents questioned the status quo. The parents strategized in whatever way possible to cope with the status quo of schooling (Sugarman, 2010; Tenery, 2005). For instance, it was interesting to see how the parents made sure that their children were presentable and able to meet the expected criteria of cleanliness, smartness, politeness and obedience. They not only checked their children's appearance at home, but on the way to the school and just before they lined up for the interview.

The children stood in line for a good twenty minutes before the first child was asked to come into the office. Each time a child was ushered into the interview room, a teacher closed the door so the children standing outside did not see what went on inside. Shifting their eyes from the door to their parents, most of the children looked much stressed. Meanwhile the parents sat at a distance on the steps of the school assembly ground aloof from their children and each other. The gaze of each parent was fixed on his or her child in the interview line. I talked to a few and they expressed anxiety about how their children must be faring inside the interview room and about how they would be handling their hunger, coldness and the need to use the toilet. The parents, too, were obviously stressed. (PP Interview, 10th December 2011)

It is generally acknowledged that children learn through being with others (Moll et al., 1992; Rogoff et al., 2003; Van Manen, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Fleer, 2003); therefore, not letting them see what was happening in the interview room was neither inclusive nor responsive to how children learn or feel. It served no purpose other than to elevate the children's stress level. Allowing the parents sit with their children and see what was happening in the room could have eased their anxieties as well as informed them of the procedure, for "informed families would have been less likely to be stressed as their [child's transitions] to school and more able to assist their child in overcoming their confusion and frustration and in adapting to the new environment" (Margetts, 2002, p. 107).

Just as in a formal job interview, the seven panel members sat in a line behind a long table with piles of documents spread in front of them; through which a teacher sometimes rummaged to find some one's birth certificate or a parent's citizenship card. As each child came into the room he or she was told to stand in front of the panel members. The panel members asked several questions, although most of the time they did not really concentrate on the child's responses as the answers were, the names of their parents and siblings that were already in front of them in the documents. A couple of panel members told Sonam that he might not gain admittance to the school unless he could demonstrate that he knew his ABCs. His face expressed stress for he did not know his ABCs or the 123s. (PP Interview, 10th December 2011)

For the first time in Sonam's life, he was in a situation where seven pairs of alien eyes focused on him and asked questions all at the same time. It was a daunting experience compared to how questions and answers were handled at home in the midst of 'community of practices' and in a 'zone of comfort'. In the home children actively directed their own enquires by watching, questioning and taking on tasks. In most cases the "question-answer process is directed by the child rather than the adult" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 325) and parents and others do not ask questions to which they already know the answers (Fleer, 2003 p. 74). Neither do they simplify question, so they learn to listen and understand through trial, error and repetition (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 326). The adult members of the families of the four children always conversed with them as they would with any other adult as children participated in most activities of the adult world and possessed crucial 'funds of knowledge' as did the rest of the family members. For instance, Sonam's mother would not have asked him to chant the letters from the English alphabet or the numbers for she knew what he could and could not do. Thus, at home, he never had to face "endangerment of his self-esteem or penalization for errors" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 326). Such questions that tested the child's knowledge of the alphabet and numerals sent a strong message about what the school considered to be the most important thing in the schooling system.

The 'I mean business' kind of expressions that were written on the faces of the staff, the nervous expressions of the parents and the 'not very sure what this is all about' expressions worn on the faces of the children set the tone for the day. (PP Interview, 10th December 2011)

I wondered how such a harrowing experience could promote the development of a positive attitude towards school, one that would enhance the children's competence, enthusiasm and connection to the place where they would spend the next eleven years of their lives. As recommended in the document 'Education without Compromise' (ESRCoB, 2008), a shift from the culture of fear to that of engagement would be much more productive and would also comply with Ball's (2012, p. 14) recommendation for the Bhutanese educators to change their managerial and guidance skills "without the use of authoritarian measures". The 'Educating for GNH' (MoE, Bhutan, 2010c, p. 47) document states that "the dispositions of belief, speeches and behaviours by teachers find lasting impressions in students"; therefore, it seems crucial to make that first impression a positive one.

The first days in school

The Assembly

Starting school is another major change in the life of the child and his or her family. It is a time when both of them will have to accommodate changes in their physical environments, social interactions and expectations, and the manner in which they do this will determine future school adjustments and successful continuity (Dockett & Perry, 2004; Fabian, 2002; Jackson & Cartmel, 2010).

A month and a half after the PP interview the Tsigjab Middle Secondary School (pseudonym) TMSS got ready to start the new 2012 academic year. The PP children and their parents walked into the school hand-in-hand between the hundreds of other children who were running all over the place.

Finally the bell rang and once more the parents let the teachers do their job of pulling and pushing children into lines according to their heights and gender. For the first few minutes most of them were fine, but as the teachers gave them more and more instructions of "dos" and "don'ts" such as to fold their hands for prayers, keep their hands to their sides for the national anthem, rotate their arms for the aerobics and so on, some children began to cry and started to run away from the lines to their parents. Bishaka, Pema, Nima and Sonam continued standing in line, trying their best to comply with the teachers' orders. As I stood on the third floor of the school building to video tape their first day of school, I thought these children will now be performing these rituals for at least the next 10 years of their life, and wondered why was it was thought to be so important to get everything right on their first day of the school. (The First Assembly, 15th February 2012)

Figure 11.2 The first assembly

Everything in life need not be deliberately taught, and that it is not necessary to make children get everything right on their very first day of school as children learns gradually by observing and being with others. A more inclusive and responsive perspective to this day would have made a difference to the children and their parents' impression of the school, as well as to their confidence in the new context. Jackson and Cartmel (2010, p. 16) believe that "pre-established friendships reduce anxiety about schooling". For instance, allowing the children to stand in line with their friends (Peters, 2003; Dunn, 2010; Jackson & Cartmel, 2010; Yeo &

Clarke, 2006) would most likely have had a better effect on their willingness to be in an assembly line rather than arranging them into lines according to their height and gender. Having the parents assist in putting their children in line could have been much more effective and comforting for the children as well as the parents. However, as stated in the Education without Compromise (PSRC, Bhutan, 2008, p. 35) document, some culture and practices are "so embedded in an organisation that its presence is barely noticed or seen as out of the ordinary". What went on in the assembly ground was one such example of an embedded practice.

The medium of instruction

From a Vygotskian perspective, letting children converse with each other in the language that they are comfortable with, will help to generate knowledge. The language that the parents use with their children would influence the children's "experience, information, knowledge-building and understandings" (Hedges, Cullen & Jordan, 2011, p. 193). Most of the PP children enter the school equipped with just their mother tongue. In the region where TMSS is located the common local languages are *Dzongkha, Lhotshampakha* or *Sherchogpakha*. The medium of instruction for most subjects taught in the schools of Bhutan is English. Dzongkha, the national language of Bhutan is taught as one of the four main subjects. Children whose mother tongue is not *Dzongkha* have to learn two new languages, *Dzongkha* and English. I found that this was a concern for the parents whose children did not speak *Dzongkha* or English at the beginning of the PP classes which was the case with three out of the four children in my study.

Except for *Sherchogpakha* their teacher was quite fluent in the other three languages. Her occasional code switching between the three languages during her teaching made a lot of instructions and terms clearer to the children. Conteh (2007, p. 457) asserts that "code-switching as part of an additive bilingual pedagogy may have the potential to raise pupils' achievements" in the classroom. It has been shown that a certain degree of maturity in their native language could foster successful learning of other languages (Vygotsky, 1986). However, the teachers always used English and *Dzongkha* in the PP class, as these are the languages of the schools in Bhutan. The teachers in the Focus Group (FG) believed that they should carry out the requirements of the Ministry of Education guidelines and what was prescribed in the curriculum. They were "informed by normative intentions" (Van Manen, 1991, p. 160), the regular practices of the school that were driven by administrative directives. They knew what would be valued in the school inspections and acted accordingly.

Figure 11.3 The groups in the PP classroom

On the first day of school most children tended to sit with someone with whom they could talk. There were groups of southern Bhutanese children who conversed in Lhotshampakha, groups of Eastern Bhutanese children who conversed in Sherchogpakha and groups who conversed in Dzongkha. There were also children like Pema who did not really care where he sat for he hardly spoke. The teacher put them into groups based on gender balance, experience of schooling and some other criteria (Figure 11.3) *with good intention. It seemed that the children's language or their familiarity to each other was not part of the criteria for the seating placements. Bishaka sat with a group of girls who did not speak her language. She sat there gazing at the faces of the girls who chatted amiably among themselves. Nima sat with a group of four other children who did not speak Sherchogpakha; as the children in her group chatted in their own mother tongue, she sat aloof on one side of the table just watching them and chewing her pencil. Sonam on the other hand made sure that he followed his friend from the same village who was a PP repeater so that he always had someone with whom he was able to speak.* (The First Day in the PP Classroom, 15th February 2012)

Each time the teacher spoke in English or *Dzongkha*, I observed the extra concentration on Bishaka and Nima's faces as they tried to guess what she was saying. After a short while they would give up and engage themselves in something more interesting, such as opening their new school bags or their pencil boxes. Vygotsky emphasized the importance of the socio-cultural and historical context of a child and considered it very important to nurture a child's first language. The denial of a language that a child is comfortable in is like "denying [a] child's thoughts and expressions" (Wink & Putney, 2002, p.54). Ball (2012) recommends that the early childhood programs in Bhutan should be offered in the home language of the children and the families that the program is intended to serve. Wink and Putney (2002, p. 31) believe that the "greater the depth of the first language competence, the faster the acquisition of all other proceeds". Using a language that the children did not understand or placing a child among others who did not speak the same language was neither effective in engaging them in the class meaningfully and nor was it culturally responsive, for "cultural elements such as values, beliefs and language, among others defined their culture holistically" (Riojas-Cortez, 2001, p. 36). To let the children sit with the same language friends had a better chance of

easing "the stress associated with their transition" into the new place (Jackson & Cartmel, 2010, p. 14). At home children are embedded in 'thick and multi-stranded relationships' (Moll et al., 1992) where they can always choose with whom to sit, chat, work or play, for the fact is that children with "relatively little expertise can learn with and from each other as well as from those with greater experience" (Wells, 2000, p. 5). I am aware that the ways of the home may not be replicated in the school for they are separate lifeworlds, however the experiences can be recontextualized to benefit the schooling process.

The PP Lessons

From my experiences of sitting with the four children in their class for more than a month, I became aware of the fact that "teaching is a complicated interactive practice that begins and ends with seeing the student" (Ayers, 1993, p. 25). Seeing through the eyes of the student made me aware of the numerous 'zones of possibilities' where meaningful and interesting connections could have been made between the curriculum and the contents of the children's 'virtual bags'. In the next section, I will illustrate some of these zones for each of the three main subjects taught in the PP classroom; zones that could have provided the important links to Bishaka, Nima, Sonam and Pema's home 'funds of knowledge'. As noted by Ladson-Billings, (1992) such connections to young children's experiences serve to strengthen their dispositions to learning when the focus is less about what is on the lines and pages than what is between the lines and beyond the pages.

A mathematics lesson

The teacher drew some objects on the green board and then circled them and said, "This is a set of stones", "This is a set of sticks", "This is a set of pencils". ("Sets" was the concept being taught during this lesson). She made the class repeat after her the phrase – "a set of..." several times, after which she distributed blank papers to the class to draw a set of sticks, leaves or stones. The children began to draw and the teacher walked in between the tables to make sure that they were doing what was asked.

Using just a corner of the paper, Bishaka drew a small bunch of grapes. The teacher came around and asked her what she had drawn. With a slight stutter, she answered in a small voice, "ang... angure" (meaning grapes in her mother tongue). The teacher looked puzzled and repeated Bishaka's words and then repeated her earlier instruction to the class, "Draw sets of stones, sticks, like that, draw, draw" and then moved on to the next table. Bishaka turned towards me with a dismayed look.

Figure 11.4 A bunch of grapes

(Week 3, 28th February 2012)

Van Manen (1991, p. 7) asserts that children come to school from somewhere else and that teachers need to be aware of "what it is that they bring with them that defines their present understandings, mood, emotional state and readiness to deal with the subject matter and the world of the school". Bishaka's parents are from the southern part of Bhutan where grapes are bountiful. Whenever relatives came to visit, they brought a basket full of grapes for them, which they were than able to sell in their small shop. Bishaka knew how much her grandmother charged for a kilogram of grapes, where they came from and who brought them. Therefore, her drawing of a small bunch of grapes had a lot of meaning, not only as an item of business in her grandparents' shop but also a reminder of Bishaka's home village and the relatives who grew them. If the lesson was of 'sets' as meaning 'groups of similar things' as described in the curriculum for Mathematics, then a bunch of grapes could be seen to form a 'set' as the child had assumed. Vygotsky (1987, p. 216) comments that "a child cannot gain conscious awareness of what he does not have". Thus, relating a bunch of grapes to a set is a revelation of her conscious awareness and deep understanding of the concept by linking it to her everyday experience of life. Here is a child moving between school and home and drawing upon her home 'funds of knowledge' to make a more sophisticated understanding of the concept of sets in a school context. Further investigation by the teacher as to why Bishaka had drawn the grapes, could have unveiled a lot about the child and her family, but as this did not happen, it was a "zone of possibility" that was lost.

A Dzongkha Lesson

Figure 11.5 A lesson on family members

This is the national language period. The topic for the day was 'family members. The teacher hung a chart with pictures of different family members on the green board and tried to elicit the term 'family members' from the class. Some of the PP repeaters shouted out the correct term to the teacher. She then asked the class to raise their hands if they had grandparents. Almost everyone raised their hands, but Pema stood and raised both his hands in the air and waited for the teacher to ask him something. The teacher turned to him and asked: "What do you call a grandpa in Sherchopakha?" He replied, "Meymey" and she said, "Good, sit

down". He sat down slowly, but kept his hands in the air, indicating that he had more to say, but he never got a chance to speak again for the rest of the period.

The teacher then asked: "what does a grandpa or grandma do?" Pema still had one of his hands raised and Nima looked at the teacher and moved her arms in a circular motion. Suddenly a boy got up and imitated an old man chanting prayers and the teacher commented, "That's right, old people chant prayers"; hearing which Nima stopped the motion of her hands. The teacher carried on introducing the other family members such as uncle, aunty, brothers and sisters. (Week 4, 6th March 2012).

Usually, Pema was a very quiet and inactive student in the class, although for this lesson on 'family members' he showed a lot of enthusiasm and interest, particularly, when grandparents were mentioned. Pema had five grand and great-grandparents in his family, about whom their family shared amazing stories. For instance, his 81 year old, great-grandfather travelled every week on foot on the eight to ten hours journey up into the mountains to barter grain and other food stuff for dairy products from the nomads. These challenging trips by such an elderly man, earned him his nickname *Bolero* (a brand name for a sturdy Indian jeep). When Pema's mother shared this story with me, Pema sat behind his mother on the sofa and listened to it with intense interest.

Although the teacher had no awareness of what the child knew, she did not take the time to ask him more about his grandparents or to clarify why he had both his arms raised for that question. As noted by Leont'ev (1981) humans are not just limited to biological inheritance, to that is added our cultural inheritance and by being able to make the best use of it in our classrooms, we are able to assimilate the experiences of humankind. In fact, to such interesting stories from the children, the teacher could have added her own personal experiences, which would probably have enriched the comprehension of the lesson being taught. I agree with the finding of Menchaca (2001) that children are more likely to understand academic concepts and experience success in school when they are able to relate to the information being presented.

Although the generally expected response (in Bhutan) to the question, 'What do old people do?' would be, 'they pray', in Nima's house her semi-visually impaired grandmother had other responsibilities besides praying. When the teacher asked the question, as Nima's *Dzongkha* was minimal, she did not know the exact term for what her grandmother did, so she tried to show the action of spinning thread with her hands. This was a task that her grandmother performed most days, to make the thread that Nima's mother used for weaving. While she was spinning, Nima stayed close by as she had to reload the skein of thread onto

the spinner, then find the end of the thread and hand it to her. She could then go and play until called to reload again. This task was one of the responsibilities that Nima's mother had assigned to her.

The children's 'funds of knowledge' can tell the teacher what they know and are capable of doing (Riojas-Cortez, 2001, p. 39). When a teacher is not able to connect to such interesting personal information from a child, she is forced to function in a 'zone of under-development', which neither helps in meeting the nation's vision to enable every citizen "to achieve their full and innate potential" (PCoB, 1999, p.17) nor does it meet the GNH aspiration of "setting high expectations of their students" (MoE, Bhutan, 2010c, p. 40).

An English Lesson

Week 1, activity 4 of the English curriculum had 'free drawing' for the week, as a pre-writing exercise for the PP children.

The teacher distributed the blank sheets of paper and the boxes of crayons to the different tables in the class and instructed the children to draw anything they liked. I already guessed what Sonam would draw as he had drawn the same thing over and over in the drawing book I had given him on our first meeting.

He drew a big rectangular box and a smaller one near it, and then diligently filled in some smaller boxes inside the bigger one to represent windows and doors (Fig. 11.6). *Then below some horizontal lines in front of the big house he had drawn was a person going towards something that looked like a bucket. The teacher came around and looked over his shoulder and commented loudly to the whole class, "Good, Sonam has drawn a house" and she moved to the next table.* (Week 1, 16th February 2012)

Figure 11.6 *Angay*'s house

The first time I met Sonam and his *Angay*, I gave him a set of crayons and a drawing book and told him he could draw anything he wanted in it. The next time I met him, he showed me some of his drawings, several of which were the same as the one he had drawn in the English class. Because I showed so much interest in his drawing, he explained his picture to me. The big house was not just any house as assumed by the teacher, it was his grandparents' three-storey house and the smaller one near it was his house. The several horizontal lines were steps going down towards the water pipe from which the members of the house fetched water, and the matchstick figure was himself going to fetch water for the chickens, a small chore that he carried out almost every day, and with great interest and responsibility. Without doing this task, his *Angay* told him, he would not get to eat the eggs.

I was impressed by the accuracy of the details. This drawing was very real for the child; it was not just a pre-writing exercise. I looked at several other children's drawings in the class and wondered what interesting stories lay hidden behind each one of them. I thought they would contain wonderful narratives to share that would bring to light the 'funds of knowledge' that each child had brought into the classroom. This would have provided the teacher with information about each child's 'zone of proximal development'. Vygotsky (1997) emphasizes the importance of identifying children's 'zone of proximal development' so that instructions could have been levelled appropriately. The lessons I observed in the classroom offered a number of opportunities for the teacher to delve into the students' 'funds of knowledge' that could have enriched the experiences of both the teacher and the children. However, those opportunities came and went, without the teacher being aware of them.

Vygotsky uses the metaphor of a water molecule to demonstrate that the separate atoms in a water molecule on their own do not make water; it is their union that gives character to water. He suggests that in a similar way the child and the context combined give a more complete meaning to development and learning (Wink & Putney, 2002). Research has demonstrated that young children's cognition develops best and they succeed academically when congruence exists between what they know and what the school has to offer (Ashton et al., 2008; Cairney, 2000, 2002; Christensen, 2003; Epstein, 2001, Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). This will not be possible if the educational program does not take into account what the children already know. In most cases, teachers paid attention to "what they expected to see and to hear what is relevant to their understanding and to act according to their own world views" (Wenger, 1999, p. 8). I am not trying to denigrate teachers but merely expressing the idea that a teacher cannot implement in class, what they do not yet know. For it has not yet occurred to teachers and teacher educators in Bhutan that children's home knowledge is of immense value. Scrimsher and Tudge (2003) assert that effective teaching is incumbent on teachers learning about the children in their classes from the children and their families, for "through others, we become ourselves" (Vygotsky, 1997, p.105). Therefore, to make the classrooms more participatory teaching and learning should be reciprocal between the teacher and the children (Freire, 1996; Vygotsky, 1987; Moll et al., 1992) so that "one learns best when teaching and teaches best while learning" (Tudge & Scrimsher, 2003, p. 212).

Refute deficit views of children and families

A deficit view that blames the underachievement of ethnic minority groups in schools on perceived deficiencies relating to the students themselves, their families and their cultures has

been widely examined by many researchers (Moll et al., 1990, Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Moll et al.,1992; Gonzalez et al., 1993, 2005a, 2005b; Gonzalez, 2005; Olmedo, 1997; McCarthy, 2000; Thomson, 2002; Scrimsher & Tudge, 2003; Comber & Kamler, 2004; Fleer & Robbins, 2004; Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006; Eberly, et al., 2007; Sugarman 2010; Hogg, 2011 and Zipin et al., 2012). However, in Bhutan illiteracy, or lack of a formal education tops the list as a deficit model rather than the poor, ethnic or language minorities that are usually addressed in most of the studies on 'funds of knowledge'. The operative thinking of most teachers in the FG, were that homes where parents are farmers or do not understand English have not much to offer that would be of any use in teaching the curriculum. Such perceptions portrayed what Ball (2012, p. 50) describes as a lack of awareness among the Bhutanese educators in recognizing "funds of knowledge as a reservoir of positive and meaningful links to a child". From what I experienced during the short period I spent with the families, I agree with Gonzalez et al. (1993, para. 2) and several others in viewing such perceptions as an "inaccurate portrayal of the families and their children". I am also cognizant of the fact that the basis for such deficit models includes "many hidden assumptions and generalizations that are influenced by often isolated experiences and factors" (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006, p.187). In this section I draw upon my experiences and conversations with the FG teachers, and the families to analyse the issue of deficit views. In particular, I explore the deficit perceptions of the children and families by the school personnel that result in making the parents and children believe that they are deficient. Such deficient perceptions are unfortunately contradictory to the philosophy of 'Educating for GNH', as well as to the many government documents that emphasize empowering families and children as a major developmental strategy, especially, in the field of education.

Deficit views of families

During my observations of the PP teacher in TMSS and also in some of the classes in the other schools where I had FG conversations, I was constantly told how difficult it was to teach and discipline children from the villages whose parents were illiterate farmers. The following are some of the actual words of the teachers:

Some learn from their parents. However the villagers' children their behaviours are quite rough, it takes about a month or two to teach them. (FG-1, 18th February 2012)

Important to know the children's family background because it will explain what kind of child he or she is. If a child is from a very uneducated background for example some children from here do not know what a table or a chair is. Some children know all these because they are from educated families. (FG-5, 14th February 2012)

Now that everything is so competitive the parents too are aware of the importance of education, they feel if they cannot provide good education to their child they are not doing justice as a parent. Even the uneducated parents look at others and show concern for their children, so it is much better now. (FG-3, 13th February 2012)

Even when we told the parents that their children have done well in their exams, there was no reaction; most of them were illiterates and they were not bothered about all these, if they were educated I think they would care. (FG-2, 17th February 2012)

Most parents do not come to school when we call them to look at their children's works; even if they come they are in a hurry to leave the school campus. (FG-2, 17th February 2012)

From these statements, I understood that the deficit view that they held of the parents was mainly based on the parents not being able to prepare their children for the literacy, numeracy and the general 'know how' of the schooling system due to their inability to read or write and because they had never experienced school themselves. From my interactions with the four participating families, I do not agree with the general impressions held of the illiterate families. From my awareness of these family strengths and 'funds of knowledge', it is clear that such perceptions are not right. Nevertheless, I also understood that the teachers and the school system were unable to view families from a more positive perspective because a system to help understand and utilise the household 'repositories of resources' had not yet been put in place. In the meantime incidents between home and school continued to compound such deficit views. For instance, Nima's mother has to cook and clean and look after her five children and her blind mother. She also has to attend to her side businesses of scrap material collection and weaving, to supplement her husband's income. She has no time or resources to study. In the school campus, she would smile at whatever was said to her as she did not speak much *Dzongkha*, thus perpetuating the image that she knew nothing. A similar scenario prevailed for *Boju*. She, too, had to juggle her time between prayers, attending to Bishaka and her daughter and at the same time make a living by running her small shop every day. Thus when parents do not turn up to the school when called, it is unfair to conclude that 'they do not care', for such daily schedules make it difficult (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002; Feiler et al., 2006; Feiler et al., 2008). The daily schedules of the families can be sometimes perceived as 'struggling skills' by less observant people, but I intend to share Sugarman's (2010, p. 96) positive description of such skills as "strategizing". Rather than recognizing these families and communities as disorganized socially, and deficient intellectually (Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Moll et al., 1990; Moll et al., 1992), I prefer

to recognize them as strategizing families with alternative skills and techniques for survival that are evident in their households, as discussed in the previous chapter.

The parents expressed the view that one of the main reasons they hesitated to visit the school was their lack of knowledge of the norms and decorum of these educational institutes, which made them unable to "interact confidently and competently with the teachers" (Moll, 2005, p. 280). For most parents, particularly the illiterate ones who have never experienced school themselves; the school can be a daunting place for them to visit. But if the school personnel had developed a better understanding of how such families felt, this would have enabled them to put in place strategies to help the families feel more at ease. This in turn may have helped them to see that not only do the parents care but also that they are also proud of what their children learn from school. It would also be apparent to the school personnel that these families pass on many of the life skills that underpin GNH. Skills that no school could teach yet are of the utmost importance in sustaining the fabric of society.

From my experiences of being with the four families, it was clear that some of their main worries and concerns about their children's transition from a 'child' to a 'pupil' were how well their children could adjust and adapt to the school and its rules and regulations, whether they would understand the language spoken in the school and would get along with other children in the school. These concerns of how their children would "fit in", in other words how the contents of the children's 'virtual bags' would match that of the school's, are some of the common causes for anxieties felt by most Bhutanese families when their children first attended school. However, it seems that the school system does very little to get ready for the child. Readiness as defined by some researchers is the harmonic match between the child and the environment that accommodates the child (Van Gennep, 2011; Woodhead & Moss, 2007, Dockett & Perry, 2002, 2009; Magnuson, Meyers, Ruhm, Waldfogel, 2004). Rather than worrying about what the families' lack, it would be more productive if the school was set up to offer a quality service that took into account the parents' and the children's characteristics and rights (Ashton et al., 2008), creating a 'child-ready school' (Dockett & Perry, 2009; Fabian, 2002; Fabian & Dunlop, 2007; Brooker, 2008 and Laverick, 2008). A school that is able to take into account both the parents and the children's perspectives, understands their deficits and assets, and creates an environment that caters for a beginning conducive to learning. I would understand such a school as having begun its journey of 'Educating for GNH' on the right footing. Sadly, the concept of using the children and their families' 'funds

of knowledge' for education is not currently used in Bhutan, and is not likely to be adopted quickly.


Figure 11.7 The mothers

It was the third week of school and I sat with Sonam's mother and brother who were sitting with a group of other mothers behind the main school building waiting for their children. As I listened, each mother excitedly shared with me what their children could do; Sonam's mother proudly said that her son could sing some English songs now, and another mother added that her son sang 'Roly Poly' even in his sleep and some of the others then added what their children could do. Observing these mothers' excitement, pride and laughter while narrating what their children had learnt within a short time of being in school, was heart warming (Figure 11.7). (Week 4, 6th March 2012)

To see how appreciative they were of the little things that their children had picked up in their first days at school demonstrated the hopes and dreams that each parent had for their children. Whether literate or illiterate, the families were concerned and involved in their children's education, although not always in ways that school personnel would expect.

Deficit view of children

Gonzalez, Andrade and Carson (2001, p. 118) assert that "how a teacher sees a child will directly influence how she treats him, what she expects of him and subsequently what the child learns". McCarthy (2000), Gonzalez et al. (1993) and Hogg (2011) claim that a deficit view of a child is often believed to lead to lowered expectations for the child and thus lead to low academic achievements. An example was the earlier discussions of the classroom lessons, where children were not expected to know much beyond what was taught to them. In a way this created a 'zone of underdevelopment' where the potentials of the children were not explored to their maximum.

In the course of several classroom observations and many conversations with the PP teachers, I came to understand that teachers held a deficit view not only of illiterate parents, but also of their children. Evidence of this is contained in the statements given below:

At the end of the year we get mental satisfaction because they come to the class without knowing anything not even knowing how to hold a pencil, flip pages etc. By the end they know

something, whatever is done is done by us. By the end of the year they understand the instructions and can read and write a little (FG-3, 13th February 2012).

When they first come to school, they do not know anything; they do not know manners. After a few months they learn how to speak and show good manners. We have to demonstrate, that's very important. At the end they can speak and they can read and write that's why I feel proud to teach PP (FG-4, 10th February 2012).

Teaching children coming right from home into the classes is a challenge-first they do not know anything and after a few days if they know something then that is the work of the teacher (FG-5, 14th February 2012).

When they come to the school they do not know anything-for example they do not know the names of the fruits and after a few days in the school they come out with the names of fruits. This gives me satisfaction that they learnt something (FG-4, 10th February 2012).

These statements brought to my mind the notion of Freire's (2000, p. 256) banking theory of education that describes knowledge "as a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing". The school is portrayed as a refuge for the children, especially those from illiterate or low economic households. Their households are viewed as places from which the child must be rescued (Zipin et al., 2012) rather than as a "place of knowledge that can foster educational development" (Moll & Gonzalez, 1997, p. 98). When asked whether the teachers believed in the saying that children are like empty vessels who come to school to be filled with the curricular content, the teachers in the FG responded that children do come to school with some knowledge from home. Therefore, I perceived that their frequent use of the phrase, children 'knew nothing' applied specifically to children not knowing the school norms or the 'know how' of schooling, especially regarding literacy and numeracy skills. The many other useful contents of a child's 'virtual bag' of knowledge were not explored nor were teachers even aware of it. Only the resources that matched the "game of education" were drawn upon (Thomson, 2002).

During the interview:

Sonam had been standing in line for more than forty minutes when he was finally asked to come into the room. As he followed the teacher to the door he slipped his right hand into his gho pocket to feel the documents his aunt had put there with a last minute instruction of " Remember to hand them in with both hands". However, he did not get a chance to impress the interviewers with his polite gesture as the teacher who ushered him, took the documents out of his hands and placed them on the table. (The PP Interview, 10th December 2011)

This gesture rendered the child as helpless and demonstrated the general belief of the FG teachers about these children as 'not knowing anything'. It portrayed the perspective that adults have to do everything for the child, in the process forgetting that most children by the

age of 4 to 5 in Bhutan, especially in the rural areas, took substantial responsibilities and were usually a part of all the adult activities. As an example, after spending time in Sonam's home I knew Sonam was responsible and capable. He was often entrusted with the responsibilities of taking care of his three-year-old brother at home while the adults worked in the field. I could understand the look of disappointment on Sonam's face when the teacher took the documents out of his hands, thus depriving him of the opportunity to demonstrate the polite gestures that his aunt taught him. Riojas-Cortez and Flores (2009, p. 187) claim that being polite is a "demonstration of pro-social behaviour and understanding"; a professional knowledge the teacher was oblivious of.

Figure 11.8 Bishaka's interview

When it was time for Bishaka to face the interview panel:

The panel members could not find one of her documents, which had been submitted on an earlier day. The panel members flipped through all the documents on the table, and a couple of teachers from the panel members ran in and out of the office. One teacher shouted from the veranda to Boju asking her to whom she had handed the papers, which made Boju so tense. Fortunately, to my relief, a teacher from inside called out that the paper had been found. All the while, Bishaka watched the commotion around her with a troubled face as no one explained what was going on or asked her if she knew anything about the document in question (Figure 11.8). (The PP Interview, 10th December 2011)

In fact Bishaka knew exactly to whom the document had been given:

Boju had given some passport sized photos and papers to Bishaka and told her to hand them to the interviewers with both her hands (a gesture of respect) and in case anyone asked for the PP application form, to explain that it had been submitted to Madam Maya the previous day. (The PP Interview, 10th December 2011)

However, no one expected Bishaka to know the whereabouts of the document and as they were speaking in *Dzongkha*, Bishaka did not know what they were looking for. Another example of a deficit view held of the child because the teachers had no way of knowing the extent of the child's capabilities. They did not know how many adult-like responsibilities Bishaka shouldered in the running her grandmother's small shop. She was competent enough to handle her interview and any information related to it, but the interviewers were unaware

that this was the case. Clearly this was one of the major discontinuities (Gonzalez et al., 2001; Velez- Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992; Tyler et al., 2008) children faced between the two worlds of the home and the school. Like their parents, the children did not have the opportunity to show the teacher, what they knew.

It is generally true that children with pre-schooling will be better prepared for the first year of formal schooling than those without pre-schooling (Education Sector Review of Bhutan, 2008), particularly, in terms of academic skills. It is also true that children from areas of socioeconomic disadvantage may have less access to early learning facilities, so are less prepared for school. It has also been noted that lower socioeconomic and uneducated families may not engage in such rituals of preparing for school, which could result in the children performing poorly (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). The FG teachers believed that the children who came from nursery schools, early learning centres and from homes where they have parents educated in English, were knowledgeable in terms of being able to read, write and speak English, and also that they were much more confident. However, one can argue that all these are merely a judgement oriented just by an academic perspective that fails to include the child's experiences at home and the 'funds of knowledge' that contribute in the overall development of the child (Rosebery et al., 2001). Many studies support the idea that the experience gained from home is much richer than the standard formal educational practices the schools can provide (Lave & Wenger, 1998; Andrew & Yee, 2006, Fleer, 2003; Rogoff, 2003; Moll et al., 1990). However, in TMSS and the other schools that I observed, the children who had some pre-schooling experiences and could speak the language spoken in the school were at an advantage compared to the others who directly came to PP from home. Gonzalez et al. (1993) observed that when children's 'funds of knowledge' did not match those of the school, it generally resulted in lowered academic expectations of those children. Thus, a transmission model of instruction that offers very few student choices became the normal routine in the class. The failure to see the rich knowledge, socio-cultural and historical background and the experiences of the parents and their children can result in a deficit view that Sauto-Manning and Swick (2006) and McCarthy (2000) call the "cultural deficit" which could defeat the goal of 'cultural preservation and promotion' one of the main aims of 'Educating for GNH'.

Parents and children's deficit view of themselves

The development of a close relationship, based on mutual trust and respect, between families and educators is next to impossible when educators take a deficit stance. It is even worse

when parents become “convinced of their own unfitness” (Freire, 2000, p. 63) just because they do not know enough about the school system or speak English. Nima’s parents always blamed their own illiteracy for their children’s lack of success in the school. Bishaka’s mother wanted her daughter to live with her so that she could teach her the English alphabet because she thought that Bishaka would learn nothing from *Boju*. Similarly, on the day of the PP interview *Angay* chose to have her educated daughter take Sonam for the interview rather than have Sonam’s mother or herself take him. She remarked that her daughter knew the right procedures for the occasion. I remember many other parents commented to my husband and me that our children were bound to do well in school, as both of us were teachers. I wish this was so.

In the new context of the school, the parents as well as their children always felt a certain degree of intimidation and lack of confidence. Yet researchers such as Moll, Gonzalez, Velez-Ibanez, Greenberg, Rogoff, Lave, Wenger, Wells, Van Manen, Fleer and many others, assert that children who have participated in the mature activities of their families and community will not require specialized conversations and lessons to prepare them for schooling or the real world. Although Lave (1996, p. 150) states that the learning that occurs within the community of practice is so “powerful and robust” that it can “raise questions about the efficacy of the standard formal educational practices in the schools”, the families still cannot help feeling unsure of themselves once they enter the school campus. Recognition of the home ‘funds of knowledge’ would not only refute the deficit views held of parents and their children but would be likely to raise the teachers’ confidence in the children and the families, which could ultimately result in boosting the families’ confidence in themselves.

Empower the home-school relationship

Figure 11.9 Parents outside the school

Researchers such as Gonzalez et al. (1993), Velez-Ibanez (1983) Eberly et al. (2007), Moll and Greenberg, (1990) and Epstien (2001) assert that the reciprocal practices within kin, friends, neighbours, or teachers establish mutual trust and respect that provides a conducive environment for a child's development and learning. To emulate this, effective two-way communications between home and school has been widely advocated and recommended and they encourage home and school collaborations as a means to develop innovative teaching that draws on the knowledge and the skills found in the children's households. Moll (1992), Rogoff (2003), Vygotsky (1978), Freire, (1998) and Fleer (2003) believe in the socio-cultural theory that advocates the optimization of the relationship between the two important settings in a child's life. They believe that the two settings cannot be alienated from one another and still hope to produce a meaningful experience for a child. My discussions with the teachers in the FG indicated that most of the time this relationship was a 'one way traffic' (Hughes & Greenhough, 2006), or 'unidirectional' (Eberly et al., 2007) in many of the schools in Bhutan. Although the "Education Without Compromise" (PSRCoB, 2008) document emphasizes the involvement of parents and communities in improving schools, the involvement is not exactly what other researchers would see as constituting a "partnership" (Epstien, 2001) or "genuine partnership" (Cairney, 2000) or "reciprocal relationships" (Moll, 2005) or a "relationship of *confianza"* (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992).

The main reason for the fundamental lack of alignment between the school and the home is due to the deficit views held of the families and their children, which supports the notion that there will not be benefit to be gained by the school through such a liaison. Even if there were some positive views toward a liaison, at the moment most educators in Bhutan have no clear understanding of the part they must play in developing and maintaining such partnerships.

From my inquiries with the teachers in the FG, I understood that they communicated with the parents mostly about academic matters, such as to inform them about their children's exam results, absenteeism and behavioural issues. Therefore, in most cases a call from the school always made parents uneasy. The following is a good example:

After the PP interview, I asked Pema's mother whether she ever received any calls from the school as she had three older children in the same school. She laughed and responded, "Thank god. No madam". I looked at her in surprise and she explained that a call from the school meant "problems" and she proudly added that her three older children had been very good and that she was not very sure about Pema. (Ngawang, personal communication, January 1, 2012)

Sometimes the parents were instructed to guide their children and to supervise their home-

work, so that they would not let their elder siblings do their work for them. These instructions from the school to the homes at times created "adult-child conflicts" as the parents took punitive measures to make their children do the tasks at home (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 327). Therefore, it was always about how the parents could adjust to the demands and the routines of schooling and carry out school related activities rather than attempting to accommodate the parents' needs, conditions and desires. An open and reciprocal exchange of 'funds of knowledge' between the school and the home can exist only if the educators reach out to the parents thoughtfully and respectfully (Eberly et al., 2007, p.8), so that meaningful inter-subjectivities can be created through shared understandings (Vygotsky, 1978). The creation of such inter-subjectivities can transform issues that divide the teacher and the children into pedagogical assets, which in turn can enrich both parties.

The disconnection between the school and the parents was very evident from the very first day of school. As children, parents and teachers filled the school campus, each kept much to their own groups. Teachers talked to teachers and parents talked to parents. During the PP interview:

The school courtyard filled with parents and children holding hands as if to boost each other's confidence for the events of the day, while the teachers, principal and the vice principals of the school ran around the campus with papers in their hands oblivious to the new faces that surrounded them. (The PP Interview, 10th December 2011)

Bouillion and Gomez (2001, p.878) comment that "schools are in communities but often not of communities", which in this case was true as there was no genuine effort to reach out to each other. Ball (2012) reports a lack of meaningful engagement of parents as partners in the ECCD program in Bhutan. She adds that in every school she observed that the family members who came with their children just sat at a distance with nothing to do. I observed the same behaviour during my time in the TMSS and in the other schools.

As the development of a child is influenced by multiple interlocking and nested variables (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), an open communication that encourages a two-way exchange of knowledge between these overlapping set of systems is imperative for the child to develop and learn. In order to empower every child and their parents, there has to be a genuine partnership between the home and the school that will weave the local 'funds of knowledge' into the educational fabric. At the moment no such partnerships exist in TMSS or in most of the other schools that I have observed. A regular adoption of such a 'zone of underdevelopment' can create a school culture in which a "norm of parent-teacher isolation"

becomes an “accepted way of functioning” (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006, p. 187).

Daniel (2009) rightly commented that involving parents in the curriculum and the schooling process is challenging, however in Bhutan it is not impossible, where most families consider children as the top most priority in life and are always willing to do all that they can for the good of their children (Brooks & Wangmo, 2011). For instance:

Figure 11.10 A parent shares her son’s tea and snack

Pema and his friend refused to join the class outdoor activity. One of the mothers appeared from behind the corner of the building and talked to Pema’s friend. She looked at me and said that the boys were hungry and asked if she could share her son’s tea and biscuits with the two boys. As I was unsure how to respond I asked the boys if they wanted to eat something and also asked the teacher if the woman could offer the two boys something to eat. The boys and the teacher all nodded, so she took them aside and fed them while happily chatting with them (Figure 11.10). (Week 3, 4th March 2012)

Such moments give great happiness to a parent, as it is an opportunity to be useful in the school. All children are loved and cared for by everyone in the Bhutanese culture. Unfortunately, the schools’ practice of sending parents out of the school campus, in Bhutan, does not help to strengthen this valuable cultural practice. Sonam’s mother and *Boju* came daily to school with their children, once the children were in the classroom they tried to stay at a distance from the PP class as the rules of the school did not permit parents to come too close. Most of the teachers in the FG confirmed that a few weeks after the school started they kept the parents away from their children for they believed that the presence of the parents was a distraction for the children. The fact that the parents possess ‘funds of knowledge’ that can be used to great benefit in the classrooms and that comprehension can deepen if we can bring together the concepts emerging from school and those resulting from their day-to-day world, are notions that need nurturing.

Change perspectives and practices of PP educators

Both nationally and internationally, there is a general movement to recognise the early years' education as a distinct phase in children's learning that should be characterised by a curriculum that focuses on whole-child learning, and by teaching methods that are appropriate for young children (Walsh, et al., 2010). Hedges (2012) asserts that an early childhood teachers' professional knowledge should include:

> ...understanding of early childhood philosophy, theories of learning and curriculum and pedagogy applicable to young children. Teachers will also need insightful knowledge about individual children, their families and the communities and cultures of each educational context; and a range of general knowledge to draw on in responding naturally during interactions with children. (Hedges, 2012, p.9)

Yet most teachers enter schools in Bhutan without an adequate understanding of this insightful knowledge of their students and their families. Van Manen (1994) rightly comments that for those teachers it will be difficult to know who it is that they are teaching and consequently they will not have the knowledge or the skill to deal with children in any way other than adopting the roles and perspectives that are already a part of the school culture. Sugarman (2010) claims that educators who perceive homes and communities by their pedagogical characteristics in terms of possessing strengths and resources can shift the power dynamics of an institute by adopting a perennial exchange of knowledge and skills between the different settings. In the following section I will draw from the data gathered mainly through the FG conversations to discuss some of the taken for granted perspectives and practices in the PP education system that are an indirect result of the lack of knowing their children and the families.

Teaching in PP

Figure 11.11 Teaching in PP

Although every year we have hundreds of primary teachers graduating from the two colleges of education in Bhutan, not many actually opt to teach in a PP class because most view teaching in PP as a very challenging job. This viewpoint was shared by most of the teachers in the FG; if given a choice they would prefer to teach higher-grade classes, which they believed would be easier to teach and manage.

After a class with the PP children, the PP teacher and I joined the other primary section staff for tea outside their small staffroom. Despite the cold winter weather, Choden with her face flushed told the others that she really needed a cup of tea to soothe her parched throat and the others laughed, and then a conversation on the difficulties of teaching PP became the topic of discussion for the tea break. The PP teacher shared with her colleagues how her children in the PP class raised their hands to every name that she called out and they all laughed and then discussed how difficult it was to teach PP children at the beginning as they knew nothing. She also complained about how she could not get them to sit in the allocated place or stop making noise in the class, and some of her colleagues comforted her by saying that this situation would prevail only for a couple of weeks and after that they would become disciplined. (Week 1,16th February 2012)

Although the 'Educating for GNH' document (MoE, Bhutan, 2010c) emphasizes that education is not the filling of a pail, the "Education without Compromise" document (PSRCoB, 2008) reports that there still exist a culture of passivity in which the students are simply recipients of knowledge. From the first day in school children were expected to maintain discipline by being quiet in class, standing still in line or keeping their eyes focused on the green-board, all of which had a common likeness to Freire's (1981) education as a domestication theory. Although the national curriculum in Bhutan is revised as and when required, it would take some time to actually move away from its fundamental structures that still follow a strong instrumental, Piagetian perspective of teaching, learning and development.

The PP teacher commented that being a PP teacher was not just about teaching the subjects. She said, "We need to take care of their dressing, toilet training, tying their shoe laces, and all sorts. We also have to teach them behaviours and manners". (Week 1,16th February 2012)

The other FG teachers shared similar views. What they never mentioned was that a PP teacher must also have an in-depth knowledge of the culture, history and the background of the students being taught so that activities in the class can be woven into the fabric of the daily lives of the learners, with the result that education becomes a meaningful tool for addressing issues of importance and interest to the learners. Souto-Manning and Swick (2006) believe that bringing the students and their families' home 'funds of knowledge' into the classroom, respecting and learning from them, enhances the teacher's role as a dynamic facilitator. In the

process the thinking and knowing that were initially obscure become the ground on which real teaching can be constructed (Ayers, 1993).

The teachers emphasized 'patience' and 'role modelling' as very necessary qualities of a PP teacher, which in most cases children experience in abundance in their homes. These are some of the natural learning strategies that children are used to at home, which Van Manen (1991) describes as components of good pedagogy, where they are surrounded by people who love and care about them. He also describes a pedagogue as a teacher "who feels addressed by children, who understands children in a caring way and who has a personal commitment and interest in children's education and their growth toward mature adulthood" (1994, p.139). Children learn by watching, listening and attending to the adult activities around them, and often with keen interest and focus. Adult modelling, extensive natural interactions between children and adults and working within and beyond the child's 'zone of proximal development' are very essential experiences for the children.

What I concluded from my conversations with the FG teachers was that their general reluctance to teach in a PP class was not due to a lack of love and care for the children, nor was it based on the deficit views that they held of the parents. It was more to do with not having adequate knowledge of children and their families and therefore not knowing how to deal with them appropriately. This alerted me to the fact that the colleges of teacher training need to provide teacher trainees with the experience of what is prescribed as good teaching and learning of the early years education, and with ways to access the 'funds of knowledge' of the children and their families in the context of their households and communities. These are areas that are neither explicitly addressed in the modules offered in the primary B.Ed courses in Bhutan, nor observable in the schools where the trainees go for their practicum. These are experiences that cannot be taught in a didactic manner, they have to be experienced by the pre-service teachers so that they can apply them when they become teachers and be able to start from the premise that "all students are capable of learning and that they are capable of making a difference in the educational life of their students" (Ryan, 2006, p.11).

Reified perspectives in the PP education

One of the teachers said*, "Dzongkha has become more child-centred, I mean with more teaching aids and worksheets",* and another added that*, "During our times we were taught through lecture method but now children learn by doing, it is more child-centred than teacher- centred".* (FG-3, 13th February 2012)

Figure 11.12 Out-door activities

The FG teachers believed that they were using a 'child-centred' approach to educating PP. However as the conversations flowed, I gained a clearer understanding of what 'child-centred' in general meant in the schools. Various phrases were used to describe the concept of 'child-centred', such as, activity-based, using self-instructional materials, and more play than theoretical teaching and no rote learning. Thomson's (2008) view of the shallow understanding of the terms, 'child-centred and prior experience' by educators in the field, proved to be true. 'Prior experiences' were generally understood as revisions of previous lessons and 'child-centred' was understood more as a play-way method of learning or when a teacher uses enough teaching learning materials with the children. Central to Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory of development and learning, a child learns best when teachers create instructions that use children's prior knowledge. Prior knowledge is much more than just a revision of lessons, it is the children's 'funds of knowledge' and by using it for learning new knowledge and practices, we are legitimizing their experiences as valid (Gonzalez, 2005).

The shallow use of reified terms such as 'child-centred', often lead to the creation of systems and institutions that distance children from the real world into artificial ones which have little resemblance or usefulness to their real lives (Fleer, 2003; Brennan, 2007). The NEF of Bhutan (REC, Bhutan, 2012a, p. 43) reports that the majority of "Bhutanese students are not able to understand core concepts and apply knowledge to real-life situations", and this is because their 'reading of the words' and the 'reading of the world' do not match. Concepts such as 'child-centred and prior knowledge' that are interpreted in multiple ways seldom succeed in advocating that "they are pivotal to the success of children's learning" (Stephen, 2010, p. 18). Completion of the syllabuses on time was considered to be another of the main responsibilities of the teachers, so that they avoid any problems when the Education

Figure 11.13 Workbooks and worksheets

Monitoring Officers (EMOs) come to check on progress. The teachers know that the completion of the syllabus requires the students' active collaboration, but sometimes meeting deadlines became much more important than the quality of such collaborations. Some of the teachers in the FG expressed the belief that this emphasis on the completion of the syllabus sometimes overshadowed the fact that "the process was the product" (Wertsch & Stone, 1979, p. 91).

Getting the children through both the exam and the continuous assessment process, so that they progress to Class 1 the following year, was also an important obligation. The 'Education without Compromise' document (ESRCoB, 2008) describes PP experiences in Bhutan as a formal school experience due to the widely held notion that it should prepare children for class I. The NEF of Bhutan (2012) reports that:

> The teaching-learning process is founded on enabling students to pass examinations rather than fostering the skills of rational inquiry, learning how to learn, effective problem solving, etc. The system of assessing learner achievement itself requires revamping, with the current system of examination geared towards testing knowledge rather than assessing students' higher order cognitive abilities and their ability to apply knowledge for seeking solutions to problems. (REC, Bhutan, 2012a, p.45)

Wells (2000, p. 5) argues that learning is not dependent on teaching if "teaching is considered as carrying out instructions according to a set of pre-formulated objectives". Torrance (2008) argues that an assessment should attempt to be 'assessment for learning' rather than 'assessment of learning'. An awareness of the 'funds of knowledge' concept can challenge teachers to direct their gaze at the student's lives rather than at assessment data (Hogg, 2011). Vygotsky proclaims that determining an individual's mental functioning through a test score is representing the individual in a one-sided fashion. For real learning is a process that takes place in a participatory manner and not solely in an individual mind.

Conclusion

It is very important to let the readers of this thesis know that this chapter is not meant to castigate the teachers or anybody else for the failure to use a 'funds of knowledge' approach in their schools. I am aware of the fact that the national curricula is not yet easily permeable to a diverse range of children and community pedagogies and knowledge and that "skills and content are prescribed and very particular sets of knowing and doings are recommended". Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) comment that:

> What is not evident is how practitioners within the limits of their very real structural constraints can realistically carry out emancipator and liberatory pedagogies when they themselves are victims of disempowerment and their circumstances preclude full professional development. (Gonzalez et al., 2005, p. 2)

The main intention of this chapter is to portray how very useful and necessary the recognition of the family, children and community 'funds of knowledge' is in regard to an education that is meant to address the wholesome development of a child (ESRCoB, Bhutan, 2008). Through the experiences of the families, children and the teachers in the school context, I interpret the major gaps between their 'know what' and the 'know how' which Sugarman (2010 p. 839) describes as "*what we need to have them do*" and what they bring to school "*that they can do*". When both these contexts are fore-grounded it provides much richer 'zones of possibilities' to not only maximize children's learning opportunities but also to provide educators with more meaningful experiences with children and their families that can challenge their misperceptions. The Minister for Education in Bhutan, during the Educating for GNH, 2010 conference said:

> We already have the basic materials in our curriculum sufficient to support a Gross National Happiness way of thinking and living. What is required is a creative reorientation of attitude and approach in the way we look at ourselves and perceive our relationship with our field of work. (MoE, Bhutan, 2010c, p. 105)

In this chapter I critic the status quo by asserting that notwithstanding the background or economic status of the children and their families, their rich 'funds of knowledge' should have a legitimate place in our schools.

CHAPTER 12

The process of interpretation is not the simple accumulation of new objective information. It is, rather, the transformation of self-understanding. (Jardine, 1998, p. 49)

CLOSING REFLECTIONS, INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The motivation for this inquiry began with my personal experiences of schooling two sons. Observing their distress at the start of school was a very painful and unhappy experience for me and my family. Twenty years have passed, yet, still I can observe the same discomfort and reluctance that some children experience at the beginning of school. I have always wondered why. Why do children react like that, when they were initially full of enthusiasm to begin schooling?

Bhutan has come a long way within a short span of time, from a rural kingdom barricaded by majestic mountains to cities and towns filled with lights, colours and fashions. Most of us in the field of education quite rightly quote, 'home is the first school'. I always wondered what and how do children of Bhutan in the 21st century learn in their first learning environment, the home. Was there a difference between the home and school that was causing the discomfort that most children felt at the start of their formal schooling in the Pre-Primary classroom? How was it that I could vividly remember most of the things that I had learnt from my parents but could not recall much of the things that I had learnt in school, even about subjects in which I topped the class in the exams?

I then came across Moll and his colleagues' work on 'funds of knowledge'. They defined 'funds of knowledge' as a "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential to household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll et al., 1992, p.134). The bodies of knowledge that they referred to were broadly made up of social and labour history, household practices, division of labour, ideas about childrearing and values about education. Many educators describe home as the first school and the parents as the first teachers. I then wondered what these skills and knowledge could be in a Bhutanese household that comprise their children's first curriculum. Thus through the insights gleaned from the earlier studies on 'funds of knowledge', I intended to advance my understanding of the 'funds of knowledge' in a Bhutanese environment. This inquiry has no intention of providing a 'quick fix' for the education of children entering PP or in PP. However, I hope that it will provide ideas to improve the situation by exploring the children's home 'funds of knowledge', a *road not taken* (Frost, 1916) so far in Bhutan. I took the road less travelled and

that made me believe that a lot of the time, a child's life-world experience is richer than their school experience.

Researchers assert that an interpretive inquiry guided by a sociocultural paradigm should lead to a better informed, more sophisticated and consequently more useful understanding of the human condition (Packer & Addison, 1989; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Ellis, 2006; Angen, 2000). My inquiry into the household 'funds of knowledge' of the four families provided me with the most enriching and sensitizing experience of my whole career as a teacher educator. My investigations made me aware of the rich repositories of knowledge that each of the families and their children possessed and which served them well in their lives. Fleer (2003, p. 65) urges us to "critically examine our own profession and question what we have inherited from our forbears, the histories that we re-enact with each generation of early childhood teachers, and deconstruct the 'taken for granted' practices that plague the field". In this final section I want to share some of the reflections and insights that ensued from my experiences during this inquiry that began in 2011. I hope this will provide some directions for the deconstruction of the 'taken for granted' practices in the first year of education in my country.

In the rest of this chapter, I share some of the key experiences and knowledge that I gained; that I believe will have implications for professionals involved in the education of young children. Four months may sound a short period for someone to conduct such a study. However, I had the advantage of being a Bhutanese from the same locality where the inquiry was to be carried out. The experience provided me with new perspectives on many things that I assumed I knew. I was able to observe and experience Bhutanese homes at very close quarters and with new eyes. It was an experience of a kind that I had never had before during my many years of being a teacher educator and a schoolteacher. No Bhutanese, so far, has ever studied the household 'funds of knowledge' of Bhutanese children. I am all the more eager to share my thoughts with others, with whose help we can respond to the questions raised in this study and hopefully bring about positive changes in our education system.

Key reflections, insights and recommendations

I present findings that I believe will be significant for early childhood education in Bhutan. I began my venture with a general understanding of the context, the people, their culture, beliefs and education systems. Through the interpretive lens of 'funds of knowledge', the study revealed deep and important insights into the home, the community and the school that could improve the implementation of the concept of "Educating for GNH" in the first year of

education in Bhutan. The 30th Education Policy guidelines and Instructions (2012, p. 3) reports that schools in Bhutan are making "good progress" since the inception of GNH in incorporating the 'Educating for GNH' philosophy and practices in terms of many co-curricular activities such as plastic free days, green days, meditations and home-cooked-food days. This was confirmed during my conversations with the teachers in the focus groups. It was a very good beginning. Now the schools must aspire to take this noble philosophy to a much deeper and more meaningful educational level. Despite Bhutan being known to the rest of the world as the GNH nation, there does seem to be a general lack of awareness of the concepts of GNH within the country. The findings of this inquiry have the potential to bring together the triad of the home, community and the school, which will give the philosophy of 'Educating for GNH' a much deeper meaning.

In the rest of the chapter, I will discuss six key areas of reflections, insights and recommendations on possible areas of future research that could provide 'food for thought' in bringing about a distinctive Bhutanese approach to PP education.

Micro culture and the macro culture

The concept of culture that I had at the beginning of this study encompassed a much broader perspective that derived from the observed and tangible markers of customs, beliefs, food and festivals. Such markers are very much a part of the school curriculum. However, culture as understood from a 'funds of knowledge' perspective is more significantly a way of using the social, physical, spiritual and economic resources available for an individual's benefit. In brief it emphasizes the lived contexts and practices of the students and their families. Thus in the 'forward arc of the hermeneutic circle', I started out with the notion of culture as one of the four pillars of the GNH philosophy - *To preserve and promote culture.* But, as I delved deeper and focussed and refocused my lens of 'funds of knowledge', I began to recognize that the strength of this pillar depended on individual household cultures. After four months of close engagement with my participants, I realized that understanding the household culture was *sine-qua-none* of the philosophy of 'Educating for GNH' and in general of educating children in Bhutan. To develop a deeper understanding of culture and to preserve and promote it as desired by the philosophy of the nation, the most important place to start is the home.

Understanding a household culture reveals how, over the years, individual practices and beliefs have been passed from generation to generation. Most elders in the country often express, with sadness and regret that in the hustle and bustle of modernization and

development, the younger generations lose sight of the values of our own culture. As a small girl, my father always used to tell me that once you lose hold of your own culture then you become a 'nobody'. The kings of my country have always reminded the people that it is our unique culture that gives us our identity and makes us 'somebody' in this universe even though we may not have the social, economic and political might of other nations. Each household has a unique and rich culture that contributes to, and underpins, the overall richness of the national culture. A family's 'funds of knowledge' forms the blood that runs through the circulatory system of the household culture and makes them who they are.

By viewing household cultures through the lens of 'funds of knowledge', it shifted my understanding of culture as integrated and harmonious, to culture being dynamic, process based and changing. Understanding this more dynamic perspective of culture is essential for the individual's functioning and wellbeing and should be part and parcel of the education system.

Recommendation: Steps need to be taken to embed the micro cultures of individual households into the macro culture of the nation so as to make every child in the class feel included.

Households as repositories of knowledge rather than depositories of knowledge

Researchers who believe in the potential of every household describe households as repositories of knowledge believing that individuals, households and communities have skills, strengths and knowledge that can be usefully shared. Such attributes are commonly referred to as the 'funds of knowledge'. However, in Bhutan, the general opinion held of most households, especially of the villagers, farmers and the illiterates, is that of a lack of knowledge. Moll (1992) and Gonzalez (1995) explain the blaming of the underachievement of ethnic minority groups in schools on perceived deficiencies relating to the minority students themselves, their families and their cultures as "deficit theorizing". When the prevailing belief is that incoming students suffer from lack of knowledge then schools try to address the deficits by depositing knowledge into children. Similarly, there is a view that certain families lack the know-how of schooling. Such deficit views became more evident through the focus group conversations that I had with the twenty primary school teachers, who claimed that there were difficulties teaching children from families who are not literate. Most of the PP teachers commented that the children who came from the villages and from parents who were not literate 'knew nothing' when they first came to their classes. As a consequence they had to

'teach them everything'. On the contrary, my inquiry into these households revealed to me the rich and varied repositories of knowledge that both the families and their children possessed; knowledge that the schools and the teacher training colleges could use in providing a much more meaningful education.

In Bhutan the practices or philosophies that value the homes and their 'funds of knowledge' have not yet gained much attention except for an occasional mention in government documents and reports. Because of this, at a practical level, educators do not really have much idea about what sort of knowledge the families may have. Foremost in their minds is the fact that most of them are illiterate, i.e. they cannot read or write in English. The inability of families to read and write in English causes educators to hold the view that these families will not have much to contribute to the education of their children. Researchers have found that rather than adopting a deficit view of the children and their parents, particularly the ones whose parents are illiterate, it is more constructive and productive if teachers can accept the need to acquire more knowledge about those families. When teachers are able to recognise diversities as resources they are more able to adapt those resources to suit the class. To make this happen, educators need to experience the household 'funds of knowledge' of the children in their class. A teacher has to understand the inner life of a child to know whom it is that he or she is teaching. By failing to capitalize on household knowledge, educators are ignoring children's interests, prior experiences and knowledge. It is understandable that a teacher cannot make home visits to every child's house. However, even a visit to a few houses, can deepen a teacher's understanding of the local 'funds of knowledge' with benefits to the whole class. This will narrow the gap between home and school. While discussing the possibilities of home visits, the focus group teachers believed that through home visits a teacher would be able to understand a family much better than by just observing a child in the class. Almost all of them reported that they did not make any home visits due to many reasons. One commented, "Without a reason we feel awkward to visit a home because so far no one has done it here". Some other factors which affected the possibilities of home visits were the lack of transport, the homes being very far flung, the parents being too busy as most of them were farmers and the teachers' own time constrains. One other teacher added that, "A full time PP teacher can get so exhausted by the end of the day that she would not even be able to do her own household chores" and yet another commented, "I have forty plus children in my class and I will not be able to visit all of them. If I visit Pema's house and not visit Doma's, the parents will not be happy and they might name it as favouritism". A few reported that they

visited homes once or twice if there was a ‘genuine case’ which was described as when a child was sick or if they had management problems with a child in the class.
Recommendation: That these challenges be resolved, so that it becomes possible for educators to realize the repositories of knowledge that households possess, whatever their economic status or literacy.

A zone of comfort (ZoC) rather than a zone of discomfort (ZoD)

Previous researchers have drawn attention to the pedagogy evident in the households and the community and the rich ‘funds of knowledge’ experienced by the children. They observed that households and the community provide multiple domains within which a child can experiment, where error is not dealt with punitively and where self-esteem is not endangered, a situation that Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) describe as the ‘zone of comfort'. It is a basis of *confianza* built through the thick, multi-stranded relationships and the, adaptive, active flexible networks that place children within an appropriate cultural frame for adulthood. Learning at home and in the community where children intentionally observe and listen-in on activities of adults and other children is termed ‘intent participation’. Intent participation occurs integrally throughout common endeavours that further learning. Learning in such situation is based on the learner’s intention therefore the motivation is intrinsic. Learning in the school is more directed and the typical teacher-student relationship is thin and single-stranded based on their limited classroom context. The teacher hardly attempts to draw on the child’s ‘funds of knowledge’. The comparison of the home and school pedagogy does not mean that a school should function like a home as the former has its own purposes to serve and objectives to meet.
A glaring example of a missed opportunity to create a ‘zone of comfort’ for the children and their parents is the PP interview. This is mandatory for all children preparing to enter school for the first time and it is when the school authorities establish a child’s credentials. It is a major event in the lives of both the children and their parents. Unfortunately it is not treated as a welcoming occasion at which a friendly open conversation with the whole family could provide information that would be extremely useful to the PP teacher at the beginning of the year. Instead its formal and bureaucratic approach presented a forbidding front, which elevated stress levels in the children as well as the parents participating and it certainly did nothing to make them feel welcomed and cherished.

During this process and the early years of schooling when children transition from home to school, a creation of a ZoC would go a long way in setting the tone for all the later years in

school. Schools adapting the appropriate knowledge and skills that work well from their children's homes could provide a much more pleasant and meaningful beginning for the PP classes; for example using more of their mother tongue in class activities at the start. To understand the skills and knowledge that makes the children confident and at ease to try out new things, the educators need to venture into the households to learn from them. The conventional model of home visits was turned on its head when teachers visited the households to learn rather than to visit for disciplinary reasons. A process driven approach that emphasizes children-centeredness and experiential learning is more likely to mobilise children's 'funds of knowledge' than one that is top-down and didactic.

Recommendation: Practices that currently create a ZoD for the children should be changed to practices that instead create a ZoC.

A zone of proximal development (ZPD) rather than a zone of under development (ZUD)

Vygotsky defines zone of proximal development (ZPD*)* as the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. ZPD is one of his most widely known concepts and affirms his belief in performance before competence. This separates him from his contemporaries such as Piaget who believed development came before learning. From a Vygotskian perspective, teaching and learning is useful as long as it is ahead of development and thus stirs up developing functions in the child's zone of proximal development. A teacher's main responsibility is to identify the student's ZPD and provide developmentally appropriate instruction. To do this the teacher has to have a sound knowledge of the child and his or her household 'funds of knowledge' on which they can build the school experience.

During my role as a participant-observer in the PP class, I beheld the PP teacher regularly carrying out activities in the class as directed by their PP curriculum. Several times children in the class practised skills such as holding a pencil correctly or drawing a straight line or explaining the members of the family; practices that usually follow a "one size fits all" principle. These were skills and knowledge in which three of my participants were already proficient. If the teacher knew how much these children already knew, she could have provided them with much more relevant and challenging work that would allow them to function at a more advanced level within their ZPD and in addition have more time for those activities where children actually needed assistance. Greenberg (1989) defines a setting that

does not tap on the richness of individual's 'funds of knowledge' is a 'zone of under-development' (ZUD). Children in such an environment who regularly perform activities below their capabilities, being treated as knowing nothing, run the risk of becoming unable to perform to their full potential.

Children who have participated both in the activities of their families and community do not require specialized conversations and lessons to prepare them for schooling or the real world. The powerful learning that take place within the community of practice can raise questions about how effective is formal education. Educators need to be aware at all times that the children in their classes come from somewhere and be aware that their understanding, mood and emotional state is to a large extent based on what they bring with them. This in turn affects their readiness to deal with the subject matter presented and has a huge impact on the child's ZPD.

Recommendation: The awareness of educators should be enhanced so that they have the ability to recognize a child's ZPD so that he/she can provide activities that allow children to reach their full potential rather than make children dwell in the ZUD.

Parents as partners rather than clients

Although most of the recent educational documents in Bhutan emphasize the importance of involving parents in the education of their children, in practice not much has actually happened. In most of the schools, besides involving them in financial or labour needs, or attending result meetings when summoned, parents do not have much of a role to play. Schools tend to treat parents as 'clients' rather than as someone who has the potential to participate in the education of their children. Observing the many parents waiting at a distance outside a school leads to the conclusion more should be done to encourage child and family friendly approaches to Lower Primary.

Many researchers, who advocate the significance of 'funds of knowledge' in a child's life, share the importance of viewing learning as participation in a community of practice rather than an individual activity of learning to read and write. Such a view can shift our preoccupation with what parents should do for the school, towards an attempt to understand differences between the home, community and the school that can inform curriculum practices. In general schools and teachers are unable to build on their children's 'funds of knowledge' because they have little knowledge of their out-of-school lives. In order to improve on this, educators should reach out to the parents in thoughtful and respectful ways.

Doing this means that reciprocal cultural exchanges can take place that will provide them with an understanding of the child's cultural background, an effective tool to becoming a better teacher.

For instance, the Home School Knowledge Exchange (HSKE) project in the UK in 2006, found such relationships very useful especially in bringing changes to the teachers' perspectives and their understanding of families and in sharing each parties hopes and dreams, values and beliefs. There is so much that the teachers do not know that could be of immense use in their classrooms. Even if nothing else came out of such partnerships at least it could prevent teachers from making false judgements about the children and their families. These experiences provide a way to transcend all boundaries for both teachers and parents, not simply for gathering information from each other, but more to develop an enduring, reciprocal and genuine partnership for a better education of the child.

Recommendation: Institute school based processes that facilitate the forming of enduring, reciprocal, and genuine partnership between parents and schools in Bhutan that would allow parents to share their 'funds of knowledge' with the school to the benefit of both.

Schooling as an enculturation process rather than an adulteration process

A teacher has to juggle two conflicting requirements in his or her profession. There is an obligation to teach children 'what we need to have them do' and an obligation to value 'that they can do', something each child brings with them. Brennan (2007, p. 7) calls this task of connecting the two as "enculturation" a term that she elaborates as the "ability to respond emotionally to children and to appropriate cultural tools and practices in a way that connects children to their social and cultural contexts". The typical notion of learning as an individual process with a beginning and an end, that can be separated from other activities and is a product of teaching, is an outdated concept that can in certain circumstances lower the quality of education provided. Children come to school with a variety of 'virtual bags' and sadly, schools chose to open only those bags that have contents matching the game of schooling. Those who have no opportunity to open their bags run the risk of not being able to comply with the demands of the school and the teacher. This greatly enhances the likelihood of their dropping out of school.

For many years anthropologists have explored enculturation through the harmonious marriage of the school culture and the home culture so that learning becomes more enjoyable and meaningful. This process coined many terms including culturally appropriate, culturally

congruent, culturally responsive, culturally compatible and cultural synchronized, curriculum and practices. Over half a century, Bhutan had tried to cultivate the cultural aspects of the country in the school curriculum by incorporating Bhutanese thoughts, beliefs, practices and conducts. However, sometimes in an attempt to design a culturally responsive curriculum, groups are portrayed as possessing fixed cultural traits, when in fact we belong to several communities of practices at any given time and that these change over the course of our lives. Our roles in the community of practices reflected the dynamic nature of community and household cultures, cultures that included the household 'funds of knowledge' in which the child exists. School and home working towards establishing a network of interactions and learning situations that draw from the student's background and culture will almost certainly guarantee maximum-learning opportunities.

From my observations of children at play in their community, I recognize play, especially socio-dramatic play as the most appropriate activity through which educators can assess a child's ZPD and also as a major source of learning. From the socio-cultural perspectives, imaginative socio-dramatic play develops abstract thoughts through which they can practise being an adult ahead of time. In this study I have observed on many occasion that play is a tool for learning that children naturally use in the home environment and properly applied it is a powerful means through which the teacher could better understand a child. The three most prominent early year curricula namely the *Te Whariki* of New Zealand, *the Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) of Australia and the *Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum* of England emphasize play as one of the most important contexts for learning. However, play in the schools of Bhutan is a concept that is understood as an activity that doesn't contribute to literacy and numeracy, i.e. of diminished value. The real meaning and essence of play as described by Vygotsky, is yet to find a space in the curricula of both the schools and the teacher training colleges.

Central to Vygotsky's socio-cultural and historical theory of development and learning, a child learns best when teachers create instructions that use the child's 'funds of knowledge' for learning new knowledge and practices that validate their experiences. It is important that the dichotomy of in-school and out-of-school is drawn into a dialectical practice within which students' engagements with both the contexts and the activity are grounded. Researchers and educationists have confirmed time after time that no single curriculum is appropriate for deciding what should be taught in school and questions of which curriculum and which textbooks are appropriate, are trivial unless posed within the framework of the children's

lives.

Aoki (1991) proclaims that:

> ...the quality of curriculum-as-lived experiences is the heart and core as to why we exist as teachers, principals, curriculum developers and teacher educators; the curriculum planning should have as its central interest a way of contributing to the aliveness of school life as lived by teachers and students. (Aoki, 1991, as cited in Pinar and Irwin, 2005, p. 165)

Moll and colleagues worked with some classroom teachers to observe the 'funds of knowledge' of Mexican-American, working class families. They observed varied cultural and cognitive resources the households and families possessed that sustained them through the changes that occurred over time. The teachers then embedded the information into the learning modules and the pedagogy of the class. This resulted in students becoming more active in their learning because of the fact that they could draw on their 'funds of knowledge'. The primary objective of their collaboration was to develop innovations in teaching that drew on the knowledge and skills found in local households. This is a kind of collaboration that I envision between the teachers of the schools and the teacher educators of the teacher training colleges in Bhutan. Such collaborative researches can help both teachers and teacher educators to theorise the practices of the households and practise those theories in the classrooms. This will ultimately empower students through a system that adopts the incorporation of students' language and culture into the school curriculum; community participation in students' education; pedagogical assumptions and practices which reflect constructivist rather than transmission models of instruction and advocacy-oriented assessment practices (Cummins, 1986, cited in Cairney, 2002, p. 166).

Recommendation: Teachers and teacher educators in Bhutan should improve the education process by incorporating cultural practices of the home and community into the schools.

Each of the six recommendations if acted upon, either individually or better still collectively, has the potential to radically improve the ECCD program. Implementation will not only improve the quality of learning offered to the youngest members of the educational community but also go a long way to providing a school environment that embodies Bhutan's educational philosophy of 'Educating for GNH'.

Conclusion

I began this study with the visions and hopes aspired by the Tucson Academics. I was not very confident about what the local households in Bhutan possessed that could be of use to the education of children. As I now tidy up my three and half years study on the Bhutanese

children's local 'funds of knowledge', I am convinced and excited that every household in Bhutan has knowledge and skills that could make teaching and learning for young children much more integrated, multimodal, and focused on in-depth understanding, that will engage children intellectually and develop their higher-level thinking skills (Brooks & Wangmo, 2011). The reflections, insights and the proposals for action in this chapter aim to gain the attention of educators to some of the key issues that can guide us towards ways of improving the early years of our children's education. In the context of Bhutan, if PP education is a jigsaw, then a 'funds of knowledge' approach is a missing piece of this jigsaw. The missing piece that represents the notion that, households do have historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills that could provide important resources for classroom practices. The people and their social world cannot be separated for they are knitted together and their spheres of influence overlap and form comprehensive ecological systems that interact with one another. I believe that the recognition of home 'funds of knowledge' is a vital component of the education of the children, particularly in the early years.

This chapter holds the researcher's perspectives and concepts that are believed to be relevant and much needed for the 'deconstruction' of PP education in Bhutan. Observing the present lack of alignment between the school and the home, it is very essential for educators to be aware that whatever home a child comes from there is knowledge that can be harnessed for good use in the classrooms and this awareness can be a strong impetus in realizing the philosophy of 'Educating for GNH'. In order to move forward, we need to look back at what we have and adopt tools and perspectives that are appropriate for the next generation of children. The recognition of the child's home 'funds of knowledge' encourages a social, cultural and historical perspective of child development that has been referred to as a dynamic construct supporting a new approach to early childhood education. Such a dynamic construct will change the definition of teachers from "He who can does. He who cannot, teaches" (George Bernard Shaw) to a positive view of "Let such teach others who themselves excel" (Alexander Pope).

Last but not least, as mentioned in Chapter 4, my interpretations from Chapters 5 to 11 are based on my experiences with the four families and the teachers over four months. Anyone reading this thesis can and will interpret it based on their own experiences. I understand that a research text is not definitive and final, but keeps open the possibility of returning. I am aware of the fact that over time, situations change, therefore whatever I have discussed and

presented in this study through the stories of the families and the interpretive accounts are just snapshots of a particular time and moment with the participants within the ever-changing scenarios of their lives. This inquiry enriched my thoughts and actions as a parent, teacher educator and a researcher and I hope that it can direct others to issues that are not addressed in this study for future explorations.

Pursuing the recommendation of this chapter will not be an easy task, for a number of the proposed concepts are a radical departure from deep-seated educational practices that even I have accepted over many years. However, in my opinion the benefits that will accrue from an overhaul of PP education are far-reaching and profound. Implemented with care, thoughtfulness and understanding Bhutan would achieve four major goals. The quality of education provided in the early year of a child's life in school would be immensely improved; a large number of young children throughout the system whose experience of starting school was far from ideal would approach learning from a much more positive frame of mind; families who already view education in a positive light would be provided with the opportunity to contribute and Bhutan would have an educational approach to the beginning years that was positive, world-leading and in-line with the national philosophy. All of these outcomes are well worth striving for.

The 'funds of knowledge' mandala

REFERENCES

Aitkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 248-261). California, USA: Sage Publishers Inc.

Alexandra, R. (2008). Pedagogy, curriculum and culture. In K. Hall, P. Murphy & J. Soler (Eds.), *Pedagogy and practice: Culture and identities* (pp. 3-27). London, UK: Sage Publishers Ltd.

Amanti, C. (2005). Beyond a Beads and Feathers approach. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp. 131-141). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. Publishers.

Ames, P., Rojas, V., & Portugal, T. (2009). *Starting school: Who is prepared?* Oxford, UK: Young Lives.

Andrews, J., & Yee, W. C. (2006). Children's 'funds of knowledge' and their real life activities: Two minority ethnic children learning in out-of-school contexts in the UK. *Educational Review, 58*(4), 435-449. doi: 10.1080/00131910600971909

Andrews, J., Yee, W. C., Greenhough, P., Hughes, M., & Winter, J. (2005). Teachers' funds of knowledge and the teaching and learning of mathematics in multi-ethnic primary schools: Two teachers' views of linking home and school. *ZDM, 37*(2), 72-80.

Angen, M. J. (2000). Evaluating interpretive inquiry: Reviewing the validity debate and opening the dialogue. *Qualitative Health Research, 10*(3), 378-395.

Ashton, J., & Cairney, T. (2001). Understanding the discourses of partnership: An examination of one school's attempts at parent involvement. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 24*(2), 145.

Ashton, J., Woodrow, C., Johnston, C., Wangmann, J., Singh, L., & James, T. (2008). Partnerships in learning: Linking early childhood services, families and schools for optimal development. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 33*(2), 10-16.

Ayers, W. (1993). *To Teach: The journey of a teacher*. New York, USA: Teacher College Press.

Azuma, H. (1994). Two modes of cognitive socialization in Japan and the United States. In P. M. Greenfield & R. R. Cocking (Eds.), *Cross-cultural roots of minority child development* (pp. 275-284). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Bailey, P. H. (1997). Finding your way around qualitative methods in nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 25*(1), 18-22.

Baker, D., Street, B., & Tomlin, A. (2003). Mathematics as social: Understanding relationships between home and school numeracy practices. *For The Learning of Mathematics, 23*(3), 11-15.

Ball, J. (2012). *A situational study to gauge the human capacity development needs for early childhood care and development in Bhutan.* Thimphu, Bhutan: Ministry of Education.

Ball, M. S., & Smith, G. W. H. (1992). *Analyzing visual data*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Banks, M. (2001). *Visual methods in social research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Basu, S. J., & Barton, A. C. (2007). Developing a sustained interest in science among urban minority youth. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 44*(3), 466-489. doi: 10.1002/tea.20143

Bateson, G., & Mead, M. (1942). *Balinese character: A photographic analysis*. New York, USA: New York Academy of Sciences.

Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (Vol. 5): Boston, USA: Pearson Education Inc.

Berk, L. E. (1994). Vygotsky's theory: The importance of make-believe play. *Young Children, 50*(1), 30-39.

Blommaert, J., & Jie, D. (2010). *Ethnographic fieldwork: A beginner's guide*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Bloustien, G., & Baker, S. (2003). On not talking to strangers: Researching the micro worlds of girls through visual auto-ethnographic practices. *Social Analysis, 47*(3), 65-79.

Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. J. (1984). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for meanings*. Toronto, Canada: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. J. (2007). *Tools of the mind: The Vygotskian approach to early childhood education* (2 ed). New Jersey, USA: Pearson Education Inc.

Bolton, A., Pole, C., & Mizen, P. (2001). Picture this: Researching child workers. *Sociology, 35*(2), 501-518.

Bonotto, C. (2005). How informal out-of-school mathematics can help students make sense of formal in-school mathematics: The case of multiplying by decimal numbers. *Mathematical Thinking and Learning, 7*(4), 313-344.

Bouillion, L. M., & Gomez, L. M. (2001). Connecting school and community with science learning: real world problems and school–community partnerships as contextual scaffolds. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 38*(8), 878-898.

Braun, A. A. (2009). *Gross national happiness in Bhutan: A living example of an alternative approach to progress.* Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/sire/1/

Brennan, M. (2007). Beyond child care: How else could we do this? *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 32*(2), 1-9.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard, USA: Harvard College.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology, 22*(6), 723-723-742. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.22.6.723

Brooker, L. (2002). *Starting school: Young children learning culture*. Philadelphia, USA: Open University Press.

Brooker, L. (2008). *Supporting transitions in the early years*. Berkshire, UK: McGraw Hill, OUP.

Brooks, M., & Wangmo, T. (2011). Introducing the project approach and use of visual representation to early childhood education in Bhutan. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 13*(1), 1.

Brooks, M. (2002). *Drawing to learn.* University of Alberta, Canada. PhD Thesis.

Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning. *Educational Researcher, 18*(1), 32-42. doi: 10.2307/1176008

Buck, P., & Sylvester, P. S. (2005). Pre-service teachers enter urban communities: Coupling funds of knowledge research and critical pedagogy in teacher education. In N. Gonzalez, L. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 213-232). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Butler, D. L., Lauscher, H. N., Jarvis-Selinger, S., & Beckingham, B. (2004). Collaboration and self-regulation in teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*(5), 435-455. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2004.04.003

Cairney, T., & Ruge, J. (1998). *Community literacy practices and schooling: Towards effective support for students*. Canberra, Australia: Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Cairney, T. H. (2000). Beyond the classroom walls: The rediscovery of the family and community as partners in education. *Educational Review, 52*(2), 163-174.

Cairney, T. H. (2002). Bridging home and school literacy: In search of transformative approaches to curriculum. *Early Childhood Development and Care, 172*(2), 153-172.

Callanan, M., Coto, P., Miranda, K., Striffler, A., Allen, J., Crandall, C., & Murphy, C. (2001). Preschool Science. In E. McIntyre, A. Rosebery & N. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Classroom Diversity: Connecting curriculum to students' lives* (pp. 61-75). Portsmouth, UK: Heinemann.

Cappello, M., & Hollingsworth, S. (2008). Literacy inquiry and pedagogy through a photographic lens. *Language Arts, 85*(6), 442-449.

Christenson, S. L. (2003). The family-school partnership: An opportunity to promote learning competence of all students. *School Psychology Quarterly, 18*(4), 454-482. doi: 10.1521/scpq.18.4.454.26995

Christenson, S.L. & Sheridan, S.M. (2001). Schools and families: Creating essential connections for learning. New York: USA. The Guilford Press.

Civil, M. (2007). Building on community knowledge: An avenue to equity in mathematics education. In N. S. Nazir & P. Cobb (Eds.), *Diversity, equity, and access to mathematical ideas* (pp. 105–117).New York, USA: Teachers' College Press.

Clark, A. (2001). How to listen to very young children: The mosaic approach. *Child Care in Practice, 7*(4), 333-341. doi: 10.1080/13575270108415344

Clark, A., & Moss, P. (2001). *Listening to young children: The mosaic approach*. London, UK: National Children's Bureau for the Rowntree Foundation.

Clark, A. (2010). Young children as protagonists and the role of participatory, visual methods in engaging multiple perspectives. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 46*(1-2), 115-115-123. doi: 10.1007/s10464-010-9332-y

Clark-Ibanez, M. (2007). Inner-city children in sharper focus: Sociology of childhood and photo-elicitation interviews. In G. C. Stanczak (Ed.), *Visual research methods: Image , society and representation* (pp. 167-196). California, USA: Sage Publication Inc.

Clifford, J., (1986), Introduction: Partial truths. In J. Clifford & G. Marcus (Eds). *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography,*(pp. 1-26). Berkeley, USA: University of California Press.

Clifford, J. (1997). Spatial practices: Fieldwork, travel, and the disciplining of anthropology. In J. Ferguson (Ed). *Anthropological Locations* (pp. 185–222). Berkeley, USA: University of California Press.

Collier, J. (1967). *Visual anthropology: Photography as a research method*. New York, USA: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Comber, B., & Kamler, B. (2004). Getting out of deficit: Pedagogies of reconnection. *Teaching Education, 15*(3), 293-310. doi: 10.1080/1047621042000257225

Conteh, J. (2007). Opening doors to success in multilingual classrooms: Bilingualism, code-switching and the professional identities of ethnic minority primary teachers. *Language and Education, 21*(6), 457-472.

Correa-Chávez, M., & Rogoff, B. (2009). Children's attention to interactions directed to others: Guatemalan Mayan and European American patterns. *Developmental Psychology, 45*(3), 630-641. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0014144

Correa-Chávez, M., Rogoff, B., & Arauz, R. M. (2005). Cultural patterns in attending to two events at once. *Child Development, 76*(3), 664-678. doi: 10.2307/3696458

Crabtree, B., & Miller, W. (1992). *Doing qualitative research*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publication Inc.

Crang, M., & Cook, I. (2007). *Doing ethnography*. London, UK: Sage Publication Ltd.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. London, UK: Sage Publishers Ltd.

Crozier, G., Davies, J., Booth, D., & Khatun, S. (2003). *School, family and community relationships with reference to families of Bangladeshi origin in the North East of England*. Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, UK.

Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society.* Ontario, USA: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. R. (1999). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Postmodern perspectives*. London, UK: Falmer Press.

De Acosta, M. (1996). A foundational approach to preparing teachers for family and community involvement in children's education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 47*(1), 9-15.

Delamont, S. (2007). Ethnography and participant observation. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. E. Gubrium & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice* (pp. 205-217). California, USA: Sage Publishers Inc.

Denscombe, M. (1998). The good research guide. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

De Munck, V. C. (1998). Participation observation: A thick explanation of conflict in a Sri Lankan village. In V. C. De Munck & E. J. Sobo (Eds.), *Using methods in the field: A practical introduction and casebook* (pp. 39-56). California, USA: AltaMira Press.

Department of Education (2009). *Belonging, being, becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008). *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.* Nottingham, UK: DCSF Publications.

Dewalt, K. M., Dewalt, B. R., & Wayland, C. B. (1998). Participant observation. In H. R. Bernard (Ed.), *Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology* (pp. 259-299). California, USA: AltaMira Press.

DeWalt, K. M., & DeWalt, B. R. (2011). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press.

Dewey, J. (1961). *Democracy and education.* New York, USA: Macmillan.

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2001). Starting school: Effective transitions. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 3*(2), 1-19.

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2002). Who's ready for what? Young children starting school. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 3*(1), 67-89.

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2004). Starting school: Perspectives of Australian children, parents and educators. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 2*(2), 171-189.

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2005). Researching with children: Insights from the Starting School Research Project. *Early Child Development and Care, 175*(6), 507-521. doi: 10.1080/03004430500131312

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2006). *Starting school: A handbook for early childhood educators*. Sydney, Australia: Pademelon Press.

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2008). Starting school: A community endeavour. *Childhood Education, 84*(5), 274-280.

Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2009). Readiness for School: A Relational Construct. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 34*(1), 20-26.

Dodd, A. W., & Konzal, J. L. (2002). *How communities build stronger schools: Stories, strategies, and promising practices for educating every child*. New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dunn, J. (2010). Understanding feelings: The early stages. *Making Sense: The Child's Construction of the World*, 17. (Routledge Revivals)

Dworin, J. E. (2006). The family stories project: Using funds of knowledge for writing. *The Reading Teacher, 59*(6), 520-520.

Eberly, J. L., Joshi, A., & Konzal, J. (2007). Communicating with families across cultures: An investigation of teacher perceptions and practices. *School Community Journal,* 17(2), 7-26.

Education Sector Review Commission, B. (2008). *Education without compromise*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Ministry of Education.

Ellis, J. (1998). Interpretive inquiry as a formal research process. In J. Ellis (Ed.), *Teaching from understanding; Teacher as interpretive inquirer* (pp. 15-32). New York, USA: Garland Publishers.

Ellis, J. (2006). Researching children's experience hermeneutically and holistically. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 52*(3), 111-126.

Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Colorado, USA: Westview Press.

Epstein, J. L., & Sanders, M. G. (2002). Family, school, and community partnerships. In M. H. Borstein (Ed.), *Handbook of parenting* (2 ed., Vol. 5, pp. 407-437). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Epstein, J. L., & Sanders, M. G. (2006). Prospects for Change: Preparing Educators for School, Family, and Community Partnerships. *Peabody Journal of Education, 81*(2), 81-120. doi: 10.1207/S15327930pje8102_5

Evans, G. (2012). Practising participant observation: An anthropologist's account. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography,* 1(1), 96-106. doi: 10.1108/20466741211220697

Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative analysis*: *Practice and innovation.* New York, USA: Routledge.

Fabian, H. (2002). *Children starting school: A guide to successful transitions and transfers for teachers and assistants*. London, UK: David Fulton Publishers.

Fabian, H., & Dunlop, A. W. (2007). *Outcomes of good practice in transition processes for children entering primary school*: *Working paper 42.*The Hague, The Netherlands: Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Fleer, M. (2001). Science education over 40 years. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 26*(1), 39.

Feiler, A., Greenhough, P., Winter, J., Salway, W. L., & Scanlan, M. (2006). Getting engaged: Possibilities and problems for home-school knowledge exchange. *Educational Review, 58*(4), 451-469. doi: 10.1080/00131910600971933

Feiler, A., Andrews, J., Greenhough, P., Hughes, M., Johnson, D., Scanlan, M., & Yee, W. C. (2008). The home school knowledge exchange project: Linking home and school to improve children's literacy. *Support for Learning, 23*(1), 12-18. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9604.2008.00363.x

Fleer, M. (2003). Early childhood education as an ‘evolving community of practice’ or as lived 'social reproduction': Researching the 'taken-for-granted'. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 4*(1), 64-79.

Fleer, M. (2004). The cultural construction of family involvement in early childhood education: Some indigenous Australian perspectives. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 31*(3), 51-68.

Fleer, M. (2006). The cultural construction of child development: Creating institutional and cultural inter-subjectivity. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 14*(2), 127-140. doi: 10.1080/09669760600661294

Fleer, M. (2009). Understanding the dialectical relations between everyday concepts and scientific concepts within play-based programs. *Research in Science Education, 39*(2), 281-306.

Fleer, M. (2010). *Early learning and development: Cultural-historical concepts in play*: Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press.

Fleer, M., & Williams-Kennedy, D. (2002). *Building bridges: Literacy development in young indigenous children*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Early Childhood Association.

Fleer, M., & Robbins, J. (2004). Broadening the circumference: A socio-historical analysis of family enactments of literacy and numeracy within the official script of middle class early childhood discourse. *Outline Critical Practice Studies, 6*(2), 17-34.

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5 ed.). California, USA: Sage Publication Inc.

Freire, P. (1983). The importance of the act of reading. *Journal of Education, 165*(1), 5-11.

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher Inc.

Gadamer, H. (1998). *Truth and Method*. (2 ed.). New York, USA: Crossroad.

Gadow, S. (1999). Relational narrative: The postmodern turn in nursing ethics. *Research and Theory for Nursing Practice, 13*(1), 57-70.

Galindo, C., & Sheldon, S. B. (2012). School and home connections and children's kindergarten achievement gains: The mediating role of family involvement. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 27*(1), 90-103. doi: 10.1016/j.ecresq.2011.05.004

Garrison, J. (1996). A Deweyian theory of democratic listening. *Educational Theory, 46*(4), 429-451.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research and practice.* (2 ed.). London, UK: Teachers College of Press.

Geanellos, R. (2000). Exploring Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory of interpretation as a method of analysing research texts. *Nursing Inquiry, 7*(2), 112-119. doi: 10.1046/j.1440-1800.2000.00062.x

Geertz, C. (1994). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In M. Martin & C. McIntyre (Eds.), *Readings in the philosophy of social science* (pp. 213-231). Massachusetts, USA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Genzuk, M. (1999). Tapping into community funds of knowledge: *Effective strategies for English language acquisition: Curriculum guide for the professional development of teachers grades kindergarten through eight* (pp. 9-21). Los Angeles, USA: LAAMP/ARCO Foundation.

Gilliard, J. L., & Moore, R. A. (2007). An investigation of how culture shapes curriculum in Early Care and Education Programs on a Native American Indian Reservation: "The drum is considered the heartbeat of the community". *Early Childhood Education Journal, 34(4), 251-258.*

Gmitrova, V., Podhajecká, M., & Gmitrov, J. (2009). Children's play preferences: Implications for the preschool education. *Early Child Development and Care, 179*(3), 339-351. doi: 10.1080/03004430601101883

Goldman-Segall, R. (1998). *Points of viewing children's thinking: A digital ethnographer's journey*. New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. C., Tenery, F., Rivera, A., Rendon, P., Gonzales, R., & Amanti, C. (1993). Teacher research on funds of knowledge: Learning from households. *Centre for research on education, diversity & excellence*. Berkeley, USA: Centre for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence. Retrieved from: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5tm6x7cm

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. C., Tenery, M. F., Rivera, A., Rendon, P., Gonzales, R., & Amanti, C. (1995). Funds of knowledge for teaching in Latino households. *Urban Education, 29*(4), 443-470.

Gonzalez, N., Andrade, R., & Carson, C. (2001). Creating links between home and school mathematics practices. In E. McIntyre, A. Rosebery & N. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Classroom diversity: Connecting curriculum to students' lives* (pp. 100-114). Portsmouth, UK: Heinemann.

González, N., & Moll, L. C. (2002). Cruzando el puente: Building bridges to funds of knowledge. *Educational Policy, 16*(4), 623-641.

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (2005). Introduction: Theorizing practices. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp. 1- 24). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Gonzalez, N. (2005). Beyond culture: The hybridity of funds of knowledge. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp. 29-46). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Gonzalez, N., Andrade, R., Civil, M., & Moll, L. C. (2005). Funds of distributed knowledge. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp. 257-271). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L., Tenery, M. F., Rivera, A., Rendon, P., Gonzales, R., & Amanti, C. (2008). Funds of knowledge for teaching in Latino households. In K. Hall, P. Murphy & J. Soler (Eds.), *Pedagogy and practice: Culture and identities* (pp. 115-130). Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Greenberg, J. B. (1989). *Funds of knowledge: Historical constitution, social distribution, and transmission.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Santa Fe, USA.

Gregg, J., Centurion, L., Maldonado, J., Aguillon, R., Celaya-Alston, R., & Farquhar, S. (2010). Interpretations of interpretations: Combining community-based participatory research and interpretive inquiry to improve health. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships, 4*(2), 149-54.

Gross National Happiness Commission of Bhutan. (2004). *Ninth five year plan, 2003-2008,* Thimphu, Bhutan. Retrieved from http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp- content/uploads

Gross National Happiness Commission of Bhutan. (2009). *Tenth five year plan, 2008-2013, Vol. 1*. Thimphu, Bhutan. Retrieved from http://www.gnhc.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2011/10thplan/TenthPlan_Vol1_Web.pdf

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In E.G.Guba & Y.S.Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). California, USA: Sage Publications Inc.

Gupta, A. (2006). Early experiences and personal funds of knowledge and beliefs of immigrant and minority teacher candidates dialog with theories of child development in a teacher education classroom. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 27*(1), 3-18. doi: 10.1080/10901020500534224

Hall, E. T. (1990). Unstated features of the cultural context of learning. In *The Educational Forum* (Vol. 54, No. 1, pp. 21-34). New York, USA: Taylor & Francis Group.

Hall, K., Murphy, P., & Soler, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Pedagogy and practice: Culture and identities*. Milton Keynes, USA: Open University Press.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography*: *Principles in practice,* (2 ed.) London, UK: Routledge.

Harper, D. (1998). An argument for visual sociology. In J. Prosser (Ed.), *Image-based research* (pp. 24-41). London, UK: Falmer Press.

Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies, 17*(1), 13-26. doi: 10.1080/14725860220137345

Harper, D. (2003). Reimaging visual methods: Galileo to Neuromancer. In N.K Denzin & Y.S Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials,* (2 ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Harrison, B. (2002). Seeing health and illness worlds: Using visual methodologies in a sociology of health and illness- a methodological review. *Sociology of Health & Illness, 24*(6), 856-872. doi: 10.1111/1467-9566.00322

Harry, B. (1992). Developing cultural self-awareness: The first step in values clarification for early interventionists. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 12*(3), 333-350.

Hattam, R., Brennan, M., Zipin, L., & Comber, B. (2009). Researching for social justice: contextual, conceptual and methodological challenges. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 30*(3), 303-316. doi: 10.1080/01596300903037010

Hedegaard, M. (1998). Situated learning and cognition: Theoretical learning and cognition. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 5*(2), 114-126. doi: 10.1207/s15327884mca0502_5

Hedges, H., & Cullen, J. (2005). Meaningful teaching and learning: Children's and teachers' content knowledge. *ACE papers, 16*, 11-24.

Hedges, H., Cullen, J., & Jordan, B. (2011). Early year curriculum: Funds of knowledge as a conceptual framework for children's interests. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 43*(2), 185-205.

Hedges, H. (2012). Teachers' funds of knowledge: A challenge to evidence-based practice. *Teachers and Teaching, 18*(1), 7-24. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2011.622548

Hedges, H., & Cullen, J. (2011). Participatory learning theories: A framework for early childhood pedagogy. *Early Child Development and Care*, 182(7) 921-940. doi: 10.1080/03004430.2011.597504

Hill, N. E., & Taylor, L. C. (2004). Parental school involvement and children's academic achievement pragmatics and issues. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 13*(4), 161-164.

Hogg, L. (2011). Funds of Knowledge: An investigation of coherence within the literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(3), 666-677. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2010.11.005

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M. T., Jones, K. P., & Reed, R. P. (2002). Teachers Involving Parents (TIP): Results of an in-service teacher education program for enhancing parental involvement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 18*(7), 843-867. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(02)00047-1

Hughes, M., Andrews, J., Feiler, A., Greenhough, P., Johnson, D., McNess, E., Osborn, M., Pollard, A., Salway, L., Scanlan, M., Stinchcombe, V., Winter, J.,Yee, W. C. (2005). *Exchanging knowledge between home and school to enhance children's learning*. Paper presented at the contexts, communities and networks: Mobilising learners' resources and relationships in different domains. Glasgow, UK. ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) Thematic Seminar Series

Hughes, M., & Greenhough, P. (2006). Boxes, bags and videotape: enhancing home-school communication through knowledge exchange activities. *Educational Review, 58*(4), 471-487. doi: 10.1080/00131910600971958

Hughes, M., & Pollard, A. (2006). Home–school knowledge exchange in context. *Educational Review, 58*(4), 385-395. doi: 10.1080/00131910600971784

Jackson, A., & Cartmel, J. (2010). Listening to children's experience of starting school in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. *International Journal of Transitions in Childhood, 4, 13-25*.

Jardine, D. W. (1998). *To dwell with a boundless heart: Essays in curriculum theory, hermeneutics, and the ecological imagination*. New York, USA: Peter Lang Press.

Jardine, D. W. (2000). *"Under the tough old stars": Eco-pedagogical essays.* Vermont, USA: The Foundation for Educational Renewal Inc.

Johnson, B. (2004). Qualitative research *Educational Researcher: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches* (pp. 358-387). Boston, USA: Allyn and Bacon.

Kennedy, A., Ridgway, A., & Surman, L. (2006). "Boundary Crossing": Negotiating understandings of early literacy and numeracy pathways. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 31*(4), 15-22.

Knight, G. P., Bernal, M. E., & Carlo, G. (1995). Socialization and the development of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic behaviours among Mexican American children. In Garcia, E.E., Barry, M., & Olivia N.S (Eds.), *Meeting the challenge of linguistic and cultural diversity in early childhood education: Year book in early childhood education,* (Vol. 6, pp. 85-102). New York, USA: Teachers College Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Reading between the lines and beyond the pages: A culturally relevant approach to literacy teaching. *Theory into Practice, 31*(4), 312-320.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *Theory into Practice, 34*(3), 159-165.

Lam, M. S. (2009). Crossing the cultural boundary from home to kindergarten in Hong Kong: A case study of a child's strategic actions. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 17*(1), 125-145.

Langhout, R. D., Rappaport, J., & Simmons, D. (2002). Integrating community into the classroom: Community gardening, community involvement and project based learning. *Urban Education, 37*(3), 323-349.

Lave, J. (1991). Situating learning in communities of practice. *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition, 2*, 63-82.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lave, J. (1996). Teaching, as learning in practice. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 3*(3), 149-164.

Laverick, D. M. (2008). Starting school: Welcoming young children and families into early school experiences. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 35*(4), 321.

Leont'ev, A. N. (1981). Problems of the development of the mind. Moscow, Russia: Progress Publishers.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In E.G. Guba & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). California, USA: Sage Publications Inc.

Magnuson, K. A., Meyers, M. K., Ruhm, C. J., & Waldfogel, J. (2004). Inequality in preschool education and school readiness. *American Educational Research Journal, 41*(1), 115-157.

Margetts, K. (2002). Transition to school: Complexity and diversity. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 10*(2), 103-114.

Marshall, E., & Toohey, K. (2010). Representing family: Community funds of knowledge, bilingualism, and multimodality. *Harvard Educational Review, 80*(2), 221-241,288. doi: 10.3102/0013189x09336671

Martin-Jones, M., & Saxena, M. (2003). Bilingual resources and 'funds of knowledge' for teaching and learning in multi-ethnic classrooms in Britain. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 6*(3-4), 267-282. doi: 10.1080/13670050308667785

McCarthey, S. J. (2000). Home-school connections: A review of the literature. *The Journal of Educational Research, 93*(3), 145.

McCarty, T. L., Lynch, R. H., Wallace, S., & Benally, A. (1991). Classroom inquiry and Navajo learning styles: A call for reassessment. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 22*(1), 42-59. doi: 10.2307/3195889

McGuigan, J. (1997). Introduction. In J. McGuigan, (Ed.), *Cultural methodologies*, (pp.1-11) London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Mead, M. (2003). Visual anthropology in a discipline of words. In P. Hockings (Ed.), *Principles of Visual Anthropology* (pp. 3-12). The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton.

Menchaca, V. D. (2001). Providing a culturally relevant curriculum for Hispanic children. *Multicultural Education, 8*(3), 18-20.

Mercado, C. (1992). Researching research: A classroom-based student-teacher-researchers collaborative project. In A.N. Ambert & M.D. Alvarez, (Eds.), *Puerto Rican children on the mainland: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, (pp.167-192). New York, USA: Garland Publishers.

Mercado, C. (2005). Reflections on the study of households in New York City and Long Island: A different route, a common destination. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms,* (pp. 233-255). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). Types of qualitative research. In S. B. Merriam, *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (pp. 21-38): San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te Whāriki. He Whāriki Matauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media Retrieved from http://www.educate.ece.govt.nz/learning/curriculumAndLearning/TeWhariki.aspx.

Ministry of Education. (2009). *Matters: 27th Education policy guidelines and instructions*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Policy and Planning Division.

Ministry of Education. (2010a). *Annual Education Statistics*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Policy and Planning Division.

Ministry of Education. (2010b). Early learning and development standards for young children. *Ministry of Education Quarterly Newsletter* (6), 17-20. Thimphu, Bhutan: Policy and Planning Division.

Ministry of Education. (2010c). *Educating for gross national happiness: Refining our school education practices*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Policy and Planning Division.

Moje, E. B., Ciechanowski, K. M., Kramer, K., Ellis, L., Carrillo, R., & Collazo, T. (2004). Working toward third space in content area literacy: An examination of everyday funds of knowledge and discourse. *Reading Research Quarterly, 39*(1), 38-70. doi: 10.2307/4151759

Moll, L. C., & Diaz, S. (1987). Change as the goal of educational research. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 18*(4), 300-311. doi: 10.2307/3216659

Moll, L. C., & Greenberg, J. B. (1990). Creating zones of possibilities: Combining social contexts for instruction. In L. C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and Education: Instructional implications and applications of socio-historical psychology* (pp. 319-348). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice, 31*(1), 132-141.

Moll, L. C. (Ed.) (1990). *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of socio-historical psychology*: Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Moll, L. C., & Gonzalez, N. (1997). Teachers as social scientists: Learning about culture from household research. In Hall, P.M. (Ed.), *Race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism: Policy and practice*, (pp. 89-114). New York, USA: Garland Publishers.

Moll, L. C. (2000). Inspired by Vygotsky: Ethnographic experiments in education. In C. D. Lee & P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry* (pp. 256-268). New York, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Moll, L. C. (2001). Through the mediation of others: Vygotskian research on teaching. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (4 ed., pp. 111-129). Washington, USA: American Educational Research Association.

Moll, L. (2005). Reflections and possibilities. In N. Gonzalez, L. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 275-287). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (2005). Funds of Knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. In N. Gonzalez, L. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms.* (pp. 71-88). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Morelli, G., Rogoff, B., & Angelillo, C. (2003). Cultural variation in young children's access to work or involvement in specialised child-focused activities. *International Journal of Behavioural Development, 27*(3), 264-274.

Morris, V. G., & Taylor, S. I. (1998). Alleviating barriers to family involvement in education: The role of teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 14*(2), 219-231. doi: 10.1016/s0742-051x(97)00037-1

National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan. (2005). *Population and housing census of Bhutan*. Thimphu, Bhutan.

Neuman, W. L. (2005). *Social research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*, (6 ed.) Boston, USA: Allyn and Bacon.

Nunes, T. (1999). Mathematics learning as the socialization of the mind. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 6*(1), 33-52.

Ogbu, J. U. (1982). Cultural discontinuities and schooling. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 13*(4), 290-307. doi: 10.2307/3216285

Olmedo, I. M. (1997). Voices of our past: Using oral history to explore funds of knowledge within a Puerto Rican family. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 28*(4), 550-573.

O'Reilly, K. (2009). *Key concepts in ethnography*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Oughton, H. (2010). Funds of knowledge a conceptual critique. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 42*(1), 63-78.

Packer, M. J., & Addison, R.B. (1989). Evaluating an interpretive account. In M. J. Packer & R.B. Addison. (Ed.), *Entering the circle: Hermeneutic investigation in psychology* (pp. 275-292). New York, USA: State University of New York Press.

Paradise, R., & Rogoff, B. (2009). Side by side: Learning by observing and pitching in. *Ethos, 37*(1), 102-138. doi: 10.1111/j.1548-1352.2009.01033.x

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy. *Educational Researcher, 41*(3), 93-97. doi: 10.3102/0013189x12441244

Paro College of Education. (2010). *Bachelor of Education: Programme document.* Paro, Bhutan: Paro College of education.

Paro College of Education. (2010). Milestones, retrieved from http://www.pce.edu.bt

Payne, W., Wilson, C., Corley, N., & Jordan, B. (2010). Transforming curriculum:"Seeking 'hard and soft knowledge' in a kindergarten's community of learners". *Early Education and Development, 47*, 6-9.

Pea, R. D. (1993). Practices of distributed intelligence and designs for education. In Salomon, G. (Ed.), *Distributed cognitions: Psychological and educational considerations*, (pp.47-87).New York, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Peters, S. (2003). "I didn't expect that I would get tons of friends… more each day": Children's experiences of friendship during the transition to school. *Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development, 23*(1), 45-53.

Phuntsho, K. T. (2004). *The role of Buddhism in achieving gross national happiness*. Paper presented at the 1st International Conference on Operationalization of Gross National Happiness. Thimphu, Bhutan.

Pinar, W. F., & Irwin, R. L. (Eds.). (2005). *Curriculum on a new key: The collected works of Ted T. Aoki*. London, UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Pink, S. (2001). More visualising, more methodologies: on video, reflexivity and qualitative research. *The Sociological Review, 49*(4), 586-599. doi: 10.1111/1467-954x.00349

Pink, S. (2004). Performance, self-representation and narrative: Interviewing with video. In C. J. Pole (Ed.), Seeing is believing? Approaches to visual research. *Studies in Qualitative Methodology*. (Vol.7, pp. 61-77). London, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.

Pink, S. (2013). *Doing visual ethnography* (3 ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Pitt, A., & Britzman, D. (2006). Speculations on qualities of difficult knowledge in teaching and learning: An experiment on psychoanalytic research. In K. Tobin & J. L. Kincheloe (Eds.), *Doing educational research: A handbook.* (pp. 379-401). New York, USA: Sense Publishers.

Planning Commission of Bhutan. (1999, Part 1). *Bhutan 2020: A vision for peace, prosperity and happiness*. Thimphu, Bhutan.

Pole, C., & Morrison, M. (2003). *Ethnography for education*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Policy and Planning Division. (2013). *Annual Education Statistics*. Thimphu, Bhutan: Policy Planning Division.

Policy and Planning Division. (2012). *Education policy guidelines and instructions.* Thimphu, Bhutan: Policy Planning Division.

Prosser, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Image-based research: A source book for qualitative researchers*. London,UK: Falmer Press.

Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

Richarson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. *The art of interpretation, evaluation and presentation* (pp. 516-529). California, USA: Sage Publications Inc.

Riojas-Cortez, M. (2001). Pre-schoolers' funds of knowledge displayed through socio-dramatic play episodes in a bilingual classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 29*(1), 35-40.

Riojas-Cortez, M., & Flores, B. (2009). Supporting pre-schoolers' social development in school through funds of knowledge. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 7*(2), 185-199. doi: 10.1177/1476718x09102651

Rios-Aguilar, C., Kiyama, J. M., Gravitt, M., & Moll, L. C. (2011). Funds of knowledge for the poor and forms of capital for the rich: A capital approach to examining funds of knowledge. *Theory and Research in Education, 9*(2), 163-184. doi: 10.1177/1477878511409776

Risko, V. J., & Walker-Dalhouse, D. (2007). Tapping students' cultural funds of knowledge to address the achievement gap. *Reading Teacher, 61*(1), 98-100.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*: London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B., Paradise, R., Arauz, R. M., Correa-Chavez, M., & Angelillo, C. (2003). Firsthand learning through intent- participation. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54*, 175-203.

Rosebery, A., McIntyre, E., & Gonzalez, N. (2001). Connecting students' cultures to instructions. In E. McIntyre, A. Rosebery & N. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Classroom diversity: Connecting curriculum to students' lives* (pp. 1-13). Portsmouth, UK: Heinemann.

Royal Education Council. (2012a). *The National Education Framework: Shaping Bhutan's Future*. Thimphu, Bhutan.

Royal Education Council. (2012b). *Early childhood care and development: Pre-primary programme*. Thimphu, Bhutan.

Royal Government of Bhutan. (2008). *The constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan*. Thimphu, Bhutan.

Ryan, A. M. (2006). The role of social foundations in preparing teachers for culturally relevant practice. *Multicultural Education, 13*(3), 10-13.

Salsbury, D. E. (2008). A strategy for pre-service teachers to integrate cultural elements within planning and instruction: Cultural L.I.V.E.S. *Journal of Social Studies Research, 32*(2), 31-39.

Samtse College of Education. (2008). History: Samtse College of Education. Samtse, Bhutan.

Samuelson, I. P., & Carlson, M. A. (2008). The playing learning child: Towards a pedagogy of early childhood. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 52*(6), 623-641. doi: 10.1080/00313830802497265

Sánchez, S. Y. (1999). Learning from the stories of culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities a socio-historical lens. *Remedial and Special Education, 20*(6), 351-359.

Sandberg, A. (2003). Play memories and place identity. *Early Childhood Development and Care, 173*(2-3), 207-221.

Sandberg, A., & Vuorinen, T. (2008). Dimension of childhood play and toys. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 36*(2), 135-146.

Schembri, S., & Boyle, M. V. (2013). Visual ethnography: Achieving rigorous and authentic interpretations. *Journal of Business Research, 66*(9), 1251-1254. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.02.021

Schmidt, P. R. (1999). Focus on research: Know thyself and understand others. *Language Arts, 76*(4), 332-340.

Schwandt, T. A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 189-213). California, USA: Sage Publications Inc.

Scott, D., & Usher, R. (1999). *Researching education: Data, methods and theory in educational enquiry* (2 ed.). London, UK: Cassell.

Schembri, S. (2009). Reframing brand experience: The experiential meaning of Harley–Davidson. *Journal of Business Research, 62*(12), 1299-1310. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.11.004

Scrimsher, S., & Tudge, J. (2003). The teaching/learning relationship in the first years of school: Some revolutionary implications of Vygotsky's theory. *Early Education and Development, 14*(3), 293-312.

Seidman, I. E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York, USA: Teachers College Press.

Sikes, P. (2006). On dodgy ground: Problematic and ethics in educational research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 29*(1), 105-117.

Sims, M., & Hutchins, T. (1999). Positive transitions. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, *24*(3), 12-16.

Sims, M., & Hutchins, T. (2011). Program planning for infants and toddlers. In search of relationships. NSW, Australia: Pademelon Press.

Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Siraj-Blatchford, J. (2001). An ethnographic approach to researching young children's learning. In G. MacNaughton, S. A. Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice.* Buckingham, UK : Open University Press.

Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Sammons, P., & Melhuish, E. (2008). Towards the transformation of practice in early childhood education: the effective provision of pre-school education (EPPE) project. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 38*(1), 23-36. doi: 10.1080/03057640801889956

Smith, D. G. (1991). Hermeneutic inquiry: The hermeneutic imagination and the pedagogic text. In E. C. Short (Ed.), *Forms of curriculum inquiry* (pp. 187-210). New York, USA: SUNY Press.

Smith, J. K. (1992). Interpretive inquiry: A practical and moral activity. *Theory into Practice, 31*(2), 100-106.

Smith, D. G. (2002). Hermeneutic scholar. In M. P. Wolf & C.R. Pryor (Eds.), *The mission of the scholar: Research and practice: A tribute to Nelson Haggerson.* (pp. 183-200). New York, USA: Peter Lang Press.

Souto-Manning, M. (2006). Families learn together: Reconceptualising linguistic diversity as a resource. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 33*(6), 443-446. doi: 10.1007/s10643-005-0051-1

Souto-Manning, M., & Swick, K. J. (2006). Teachers' beliefs about parent and family involvement: Rethinking our family involvement paradigm. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 34*(2), 187-193. doi: 10.1007/s10643-006-0063-5

Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1990). The inductive case study approach to teaching anthropology. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 21*(2), 106-112. doi: 10.2307/3195794

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. London, UK: Sage Publishers Ltd.

Stanczak, G. C. (Ed.). (2007). *Visual research methods: Image, society and representation*. Carlifornia, USA: Sage Publication Inc.

Stephen, C. (2010). Pedagogy: the silent partner in early years learning. *Early Years, 30*(1), 15-28. doi: 10.1080/09575140903402881

Stern, B. S., & Kysika, M. L. (Eds.). (2008). *Contemporary readings in curriculum*. California, USA: Sage Publications Inc.

Street, C. (2005). Funds of knowledge at work in the writing classroom. *Multicultural Education, 13*(2), 22-25.

Sugarman, S. (2010). Seeing past the fences: Finding funds of knowledge for ethical teaching. *The New Educator, 6*, 96 - 117.

Tapia, J. (2004). Latino households and schooling: economic and socio-cultural factors affecting students' learning and academic performance. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 17*(3), 415-436. doi: 10.1080/0951839042000204616

Taylor, S.J., & Bogden, R. (1984). Introduction to qualitative research: The search for meaning. New York, USA: John Wiley.

Tenery, M. F. (2005). La visita. In N. Gonzalez, L. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (pp. 119-130). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Thompson J. (1990) Hermeneutic inquiry. In Moody E (Ed.), *Advancing nursing science through research*, (Vol.2, pp. 223–286).California, USA: Sage Publications Inc.

Thomson, P. (2002). *Schooling the rustbelt kids: Making the difference in changing times*. NSW, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Thomson, P., & Hall, C. (2008). Opportunities missed and/or thwarted? 'Funds of Knowledge' meet the English national curriculum. *Curriculum Journal, 19*(2), 87-103.

Torrance, H. (2008). Assessment as learning: How the use of explicit learning objectives, assessment criteria and feedback in post-secondary education and training can come to dominate learning. In K. Hall, P. Murphy & J. Soler (Eds.), *Pedagogy and practice: Culture and identities* (pp. 193-205). London, UK: Sage Publishers Ltd.

Tudge, J. & Scrimsher, S. (2003). Lev S. Vygotsky on education: A cultural historical, interpersonal, and individual approach to development. In B. J. Zimmerman & D. H. Schunk (Eds.), *Educational psychology: A century of contributions* (pp. 207–228). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Tyler, K. M., Uqdah, A. L., Dillihunt, M. L., Beatty-Hazelbaker, R., Conner, T., Gadson, N., Stevens, R. (2008). Cultural discontinuity: Toward a quantitative investigation of a major hypothesis in education. *Educational Researcher, 37*(5), 280-297. doi: 10.3102/0013189x08321459

Upadhyay, B. R. (2006). Using students' lived experiences in an urban science classroom: An elementary school teacher's thinking. *Science Education, 90*(1), 94-110. doi: 10.1002/sce.20095

Van Gennep, A. (2011). *The rites of passage*: Chicago, Canada: University of Chicago Press.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario, Cananda: The Althouse Press.

Van Manen, M. (1991). *The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*: New York, USA: State University of New York Press.

Van Manen, M. (1994). Pedagogy, virtue, and narrative identity in teaching. *Curriculum Inquiry, 24*(2), 135-170. doi: 10.2307/1180112

Vélez-lbáñez, C. G. (1988). Networks of exchange among Mexicans in the US and Mexico: Local level mediating responses to national and international transformations. *Urban Anthropology,* 17(1), 27-51.

Velez-Ibanez, C.G., & Greenberg, J.B. (1990, November).*Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S. Mexican households in the context of the borderlands*. Paper presented at America Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, USA.

Velez-Ibanez, C. G., & Greenberg, J. B. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S.-Mexican households. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 23*(4), 313-335.

Velez-Ibanez, C. G. (1995). The challenge of funds of knowledge in urban arenas. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 749*(1), 253-280.

Velez-Ibanez, C. G., & Greenberg, J. B. (2005). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge. In N. Gonzalez, L. C. Moll & C. Amanti (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp. 47-69). New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers.

Vygotsky, L . S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*, (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner & E. Souberman, (Eds. & Trans.).Massachusetts, USA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Massachusetts, USA: Massachusetts Information of Technology Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1987) The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky. In Rieber, R.W & Carton, A (Eds.), *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky.* New York, USA: Plenum Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1993). The fundamentals of defectology . In R.W. Rieber & A.S. Carton (eds), J.E. Knox & C.B. Stevens (trans.) *The Collected Works of LS Vygotsky*, *2*, 153-219.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1997). *The history of the development of higher mental functions*. (M.J.Hall, Trans.,Vol. 4). New York, USA: Plenum Press.

Walsh, D. J., Tobin, J. J., & Graue, M. E. (1993). The interpretive voice: Qualitative research in early childhood education. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (pp. 464-476). New York, USA: MacMillan.

Walsh, G. M., McGuinness, C., Sproule, L., & Trew, K. (2010). Implementing a play-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum in Northern Ireland primary schools: What lessons have we learned? *Early Years, 30*(1), 53-66.

Wangchuk, K. C., Choden, R., Choden, K., Zangpo, S., & Yangden. (2012). The status of early childhood care and development in Bhutan: An internal report for ECCD situational study. Paro, Bhutan: Paro College of Education.

Wartofsky, M. (1983). The child's construction of the world and the world's construction of the child: From historical epistemology to historical psychology. In F. S. Kessel & A. W. Siegel (Eds.), *The child and other cultural inventions: Houston Symposium 4* (Vol. 4). New York, USA: Praeger Publishers.

Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: Towards a socio-cultural practice and theory of education*: New York, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, G. (2000). Dialogic inquiry in education: Building on the legacy of Vygotsky. In C.D Lee & P Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research,* (pp. 51-85). New York, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, G. (2008). Dialogue, inquiry and the construction of learning communities. *Transforming learning in schools and communities: The remaking of education for a cosmopolitan society.* London, UK: Continuum.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems Thinker, 9*(5), 2-3.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*: New York, USA: Cambridge University Press.

Wink, J., & Putney, L. (2002). *A vision of Vygotsky*. Boston, USA: Allyn & Bacon.

Wolcott, H. F. (2008). *Ethnography: A way of seeing.* (2 ed.). London, UK: AltaMira Press.

Wolf, E. R. (1966). *Peasants*. New Jersey, USA: Prentice-Hall.

Woodhead, M., & Moss, P. (2007). *Early childhood and primary education: Transitions in the lives of young children*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Wertsch, J. V., & Stone, C. A. (1979). *A social interactional analysis of learning disabilities remediation*. Paper presented at the International Conference of the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, San Francisco, USA.

Yeo, L. S., & Clarke, C. (2006). Adjustment to the first year in school - A Singapore perspective. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 14*(2), 55-68.

Zipin, L. (2009). Dark funds of knowledge, deep funds of pedagogy: Exploring boundaries between life-worlds and schools. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education, 30*(3), 317-331. doi: 10.1080/01596300903037044

APPENDIX A: LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION
From the Director of Education

ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

THIMPHU: BHUTAN

Ref: MoE/DSE/2011/5024

5th December, 2011

To Whom It May Concern

Mrs. Tshering Wangmo, UNE Armidale, is undertaking a research on the topic "Examining the funds of knowledge as children transition from home to school in Bhutan. This research is conducted as a partial fulfilment for her Ph. D in Early Childhood Education at the University of New England, Australia and it requires the involvement of Principals, teachers, students and their parents from the following schools in Bhutan:

1. Khangkha MSS, Paro
2. Lango LSS, Paro.
3. Woochu MSS.
4. Drugyel LSS.
5. Taju LSS.

Therefore, all the concerned school heads and teachers are requested to facilitate and aid Mrs. Tshering Wangmo in her data collection in any way possible.

[redacted]

(Tshewang Tandin)
DIRECTOR GENERAL

TEL: 975-2-325325 TELEFAX: 975-2-321794

To the Parents

School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia

Phone: 61 2 6773 4221
Fax: 61 2 6773 2445
Email: education@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/education

INFORMATION SHEET for PARENTS

Research Project: Examining 'funds of knowledge' as PP children transition from home to school in Bhutan: In the context of Educating for GNH.

I wish to invite you to participate in my research on the above topic. The details of the study follow and I hope you will consider being involved. I am conducting this research project for a PhD degree at the University of New England. My supervisors are Dr. Margaret Brook and Dr. Nicole Green of University of New England. They can be contacted by email at mbrooks3@une.edu.au or ngreen7@une.edu.au by phone on 0061 02 6773 2654 or 0061 02 6773 3885 respectively. I can be contacted by email at twangmo2@une.edu.au or by phone on 0061 02 6773 2906.

Aim of the Study:

Based on the need for a sound understanding of ECCD for Bhutan, this research endeavours to focus on the intersection of home, community and school. Through this study of the local 'funds of knowledge' I sought to answer two overarching questions:

> How can a teacher better understand the knowledge, culture, values and strengths of the homes, community and the school of the PP children and their families?

How can the knowledge of the children, families and the community be of use in building culturally, historically and socially sensitive and meaningful experiences for PP children that are consonant with Bhutan's efforts in 'Educating for GNH'?'

Home Visits:

I would like to visit your home at least once a week to observe the families' daily activities in and around the home, mainly to see the activities your child is involved in. We will also have some informal discussions about your child, his/her education, your expectations of him/her, the kind of preparations for school etc. This is definitely not to make any judgements but to observe and value the child's home experiences, which is a major focus of my study.

The activities and the conversations will be voice recorded, photographed and sometimes video recorded. Following the visits, I will offer you the opportunity to hear and view the recordings. Participation is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent from the project and discontinue at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

The audio-video recordings, the photographs, the transcriptions of the conversations and other data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's office at all times. Only the researcher and the supervisors will have access to the data.

Research Process:

It is anticipated that this research will be completed by the end of June 2014. The audio-video recordings, the photographs, the transcribed conversations and other data gathered will be included in my thesis and may also be presented at conferences or written up in journals.

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE11/167, Valid to 25/11/2012)

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351.

Telephone: (02) 6773 3449 Facsimile (02) 6773 3543

Email: ethics@une.edu.au

OR

Dr. Dorji Thinley

Director

Research and External Relations

Royal University of Bhutan

Ph. No. 0011975 02 336455

Fax no. 0011975 02 3374 53

Email: dorji_thinley@pce.edu.bt

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to working with you.

Regards

Tshering Wangmo

To the PP Teacher

School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone: 61 2 6773 4221
Fax: 61 2 6773 2445
Email: education@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/education

INFORMATION SHEET for the PP TEACHER

(Class Observation)

Research Title: Examining 'funds of knowledge' as PP children transition from home to school in Bhutan: In the context of Educating for GNH

I wish to invite you to participate in my research on the above topic. The details of the study follow and I hope you will consider being involved. I am conducting this research project for my PhD at the University of New England. My supervisors are Dr. Margaret Brook and Dr. Nicole Green of University of New England. They can be contacted by email at mbrooks3@une.edu.au or ngreen7@une.edu.au by phone on 0061 02 6773 2654 or 0061 02 6773 3885 respectively. I can be contacted by email at twangmo2@une.edu.au or by phone on 0061 02 6773 2906.

Aim of the Study:

Based on the need for a sound understanding of ECCD for Bhutan, this research endeavours to focus on the intersection of home, community and school. Through this study of the local 'funds of knowledge' I sought to answer two overarching questions:

> How can a teacher better understand the knowledge, culture, values and strengths of the homes, community and the school of the PP children and their families?
>
> How can the knowledge of the children, families and the community be of use in building culturally, historically and socially sensitive and meaningful experiences for PP children that are consonant with Bhutan's efforts in 'Educating for GNH'?'

Class Observations:

I would like to observe your PP class for the first month of schooling, at any time convenient for you and your children. The main purpose is to continue to observe the 4 children that I had observed at their homes. I would like to observe their experiences in the school and the class.

The observations will be video recorded and photographed. Following the observation, the recordings and photographs can be viewed if you wish to.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent from the project and discontinue at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

The audio-video recordings, the photographs, the transcriptions of the conversations and other data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's office at all times. Only the researcher and the supervisors will have access to the data.

Research Process:

It is anticipated that this research will be completed by the end of June 2014. The audio-video recordings, the photographs, the transcribed conversations and other data gathered will be included in my thesis and may also be presented at conferences or written up in journals.
This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE11/167, Valid to 25/11/2012)

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351.
Telephone: (02) 6773 3449 Facsimile (02) 6773 3543
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

OR

Dr. Dorji Thinley
Director
Research and External Relations
Royal University of Bhutan
Ph. No. 0011975 02 336455
Fax no. 0011975 02 3374 53
Email: dorji_thinley@pce.edu.bt
Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to working with you.

Regards
Tshering Wangmo

To the Focus Group Teachers

School of Education
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone: 61 2 6773 4221
Fax: 61 2 6773 2445
Email: education@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/education

INFORMATION SHEET for the FOCUS GROUP TEACHERS

Research Title: Examining 'funds of knowledge' as PP children transition from home to school in Bhutan: In the context of Educating for GNH.

I wish to invite you to participate in my research on the above topic. The details of the study follow and I hope you will consider being involved. I am conducting this research project for my PhD at the University of New England. My supervisors are Dr. Margaret Brook and Dr. Nicole Green of University of New England. They can be contacted by email at mbrooks3@une.edu.au or ngreen7@une.edu.au by phone on 0061 02 6773 2654 or 0061 02 6773 3885 respectively. I can be contacted by email at twangmo2@une.edu.au or by phone on 0061 02 6773 2906.

Aim of the Study:

Based on the need for a sound understanding of ECCD for Bhutan, this research endeavours to focus on the intersection of home, community and school. Through this study of the local 'funds of knowledge' I sought to answer two overarching questions:

> How can a teacher better understand the knowledge, culture, values and strengths of the homes, community and the school of the PP children and their families?
>
> How can the knowledge of the children, families and the community be of use in building culturally, historically and socially sensitive and meaningful experiences for PP children that are consonant with Bhutan's efforts in 'Educating for GNH'?'

Focus Group Interview:

I would like to request for an hour of your time to sit together and discuss a few issues relating to your experiences of being a PP class teacher. Any kind of information that you provide will be very useful for the research and for the Early Childhood Education programs in Bhutan.

The discussions will be recorded and photographed. Following the discussions, I will offer you the opportunity to hear and view the recordings.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent from the project and discontinue at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

The audio-video recordings, the photographs, the transcriptions of the conversations and other data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's office at all times. Only the researcher and the supervisors will have access to the data.

Research Process:

It is anticipated that this research will be completed by the end of June 2014. The audio-video recordings, the photographs, the transcribed conversations and other data gathered will be included in my thesis and may also be presented at conferences or written up in journals.
This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE11/167, Valid to 25/11/2012)

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services
University of New England
Armidale, NSW 2351.
Telephone: (02) 6773 3449 Facsimile (02) 6773 3543
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

OR
Dr. Dorji Thinley
Director
Research and External Relations
Royal University of Bhutan

Ph. No. 0011975 02 336455
Fax no. 0011975 02 3374 53
Email: dorji_thinley@pce.edu.bt
Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to working with you.

Regards
Tshering Wangmo

APPENDIX B: CONSENTS

From the Human Research Ethics Committee

Ethics Office
Research Development & Integrity
Research Division
Armidale NSW 2351
Australia
Phone 02 6773 3449
Fax 02 6773 3543
jo-ann.sozou@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/research-services

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Dr M Brooks, Dr N Green & Mrs T Wangmo
School of Education

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE:	Examining Funds of Knowledge as children transition from home to school in Bhutan: In the context of Education for GNH.
APPROVAL No.:	HE11/167
COMMENCEMENT DATE:	25/11/2011
APPROVAL VALID TO:	25/11/2012
COMMENTS:	Nil. Conditions met in full.

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years.
For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project. The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address: http://www.une.edu.au/research-services/researchdevelopmentintegrity/ethics/human-ethics/hrecforms.php

The *NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* requires that researchers must report immediately to the Human Research Ethics Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of participants, proposed changes in the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five year period, the Research Ethics Officer should be advised of the new location.

[redacted]

31/08/2011

Jo-Ann Sozou
Secretary/Research Ethics Officer

A11/107

From the Participants

Research Title: Examining 'funds of knowledge' as PP children transition from home to school in Bhutan: In the context of Educating for GNH

I,…….…… have read the information contained in the Information Sheet and

any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. Yes/No

I

agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw at any time. Yes/No

I agree to have my voice recorded and transcribed. Yes/No

I agree to being photographed. Yes/No

I agree to be video recorded. Yes/No

I agree to my photographs being used in publications and presentations. Yes/No

I agree to my interviews being quoted in publications and presentations. Yes/No
I agree to the data gathered for the study being published. Yes/No

…….. …….

Participant Date

Tshering Wangmo

…….. …….

Researcher Date

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Discussion: Themes and Procedures

- Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this discussion.
- Reading the Information sheets by the teachers.
- A copy of the Letter from the Director General of MoE for each teacher.
- Signing the consent forms.
- Language of discussion Eng/Dzongkha/ Lotshampakha or a mix – does not matter.

I break the ice with a simple question - If given a choice which levels of classes would you prefer to teach? Why?

In the course of the discussions cover the following areas.

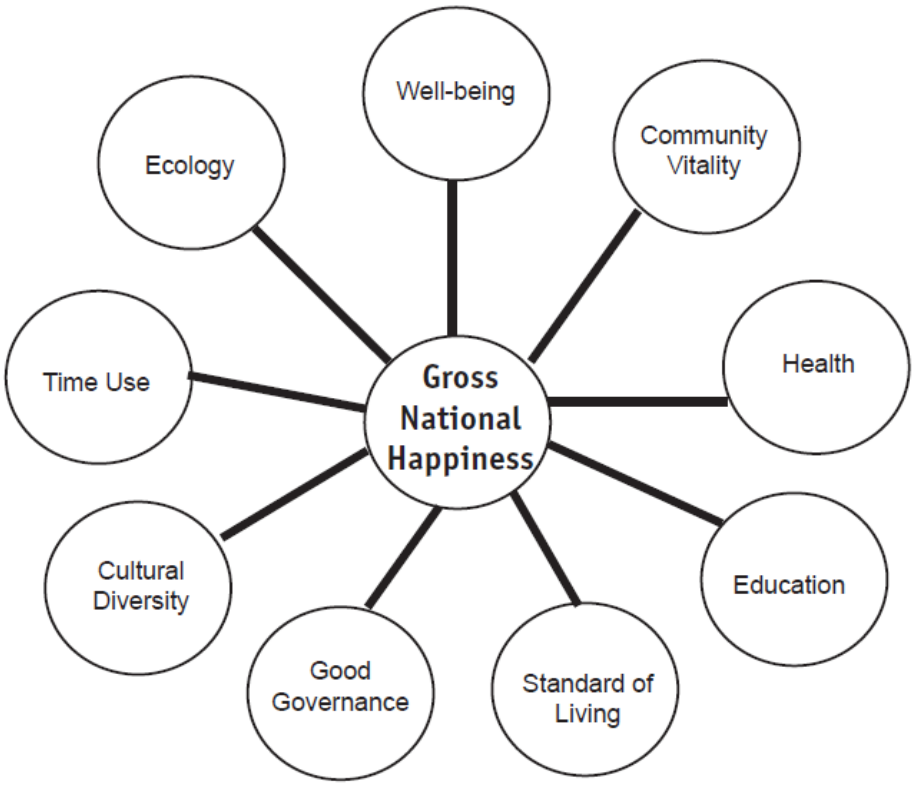
- Gratifications of being a PP teacher.
- Challenges of teaching a PP class. How do you deal with them?
- A brief description of a PP child. For example a 6 years old…innocent.. etc.
- A PP teacher's roles and responsibiulities.
- Changes in the education of PP children from the time you first taught in a lower primary class until now.
- Involvement of parents or community in the education of their children.
- Visits to their children's homes?
- What does it mean to teach or learn?
- Say the CAPSD is rewriting the PP curriculum and they have asked you for advice; is there any suggestion that you would like to make?
- Some time in the winters of 2010, the Education system in the country had adopted a motion titled "Educating for GNH" – what was it all about? Can you share some examples of how you are incorporating this philosophy into your daily activities with the PP children?

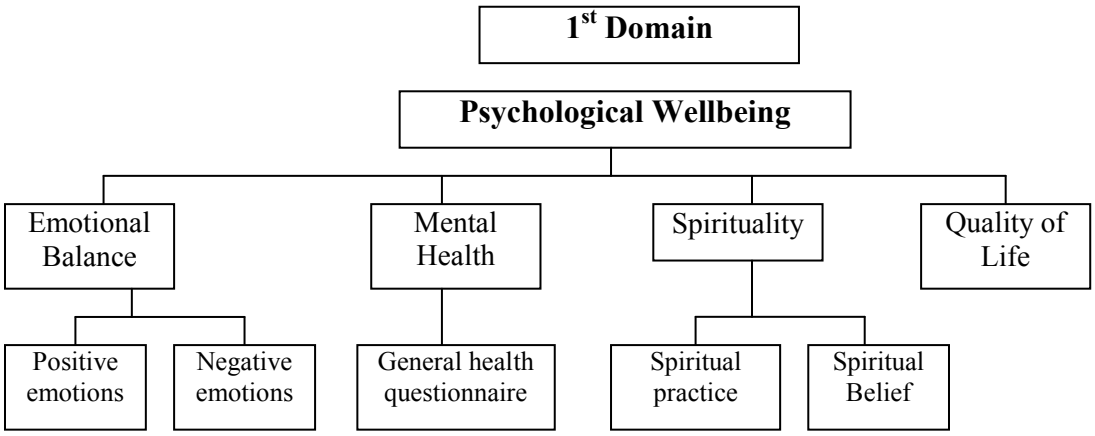
- Thank you, so much, this was a very informative discussion, I apologize for taking up so much of your time. Thank you once more.

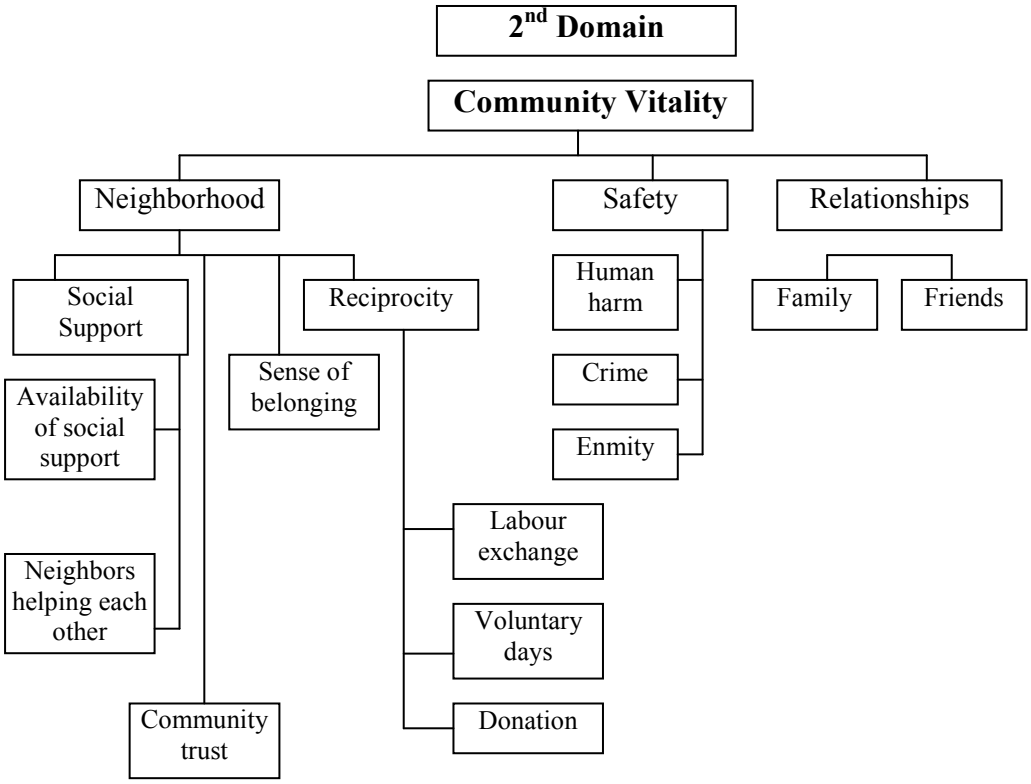
APPENDIX D

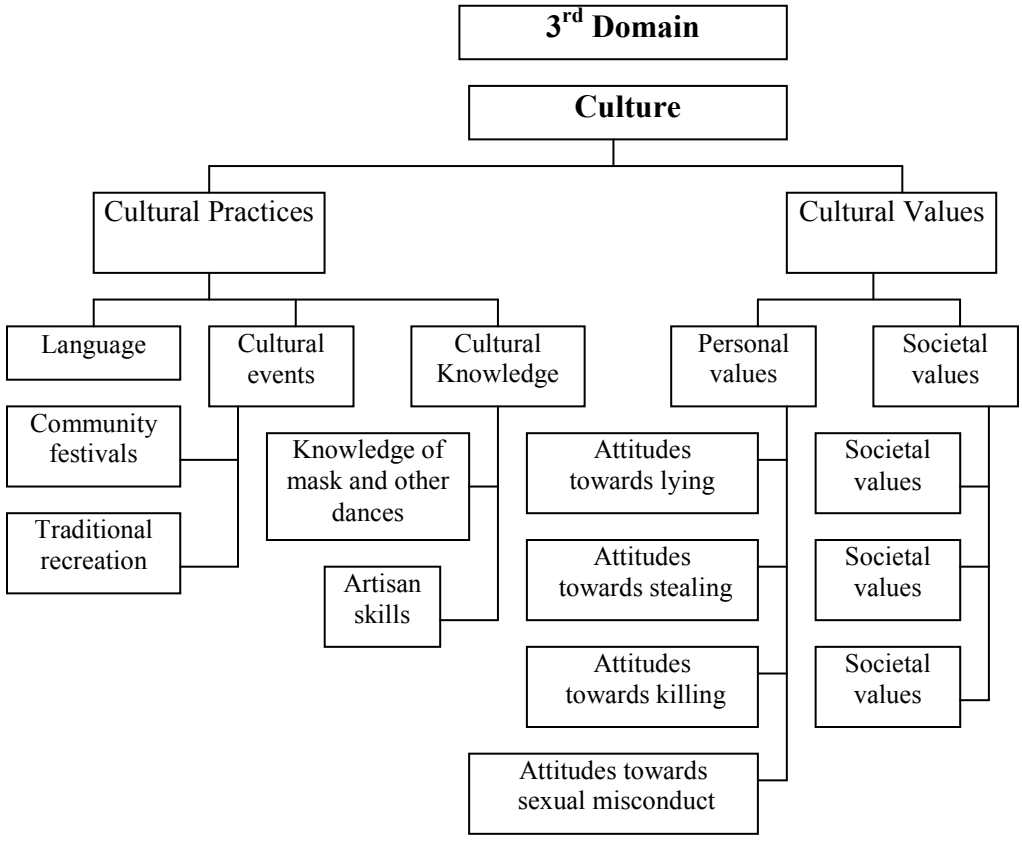
The Nine Domains and Seventy Two Variable of GNH

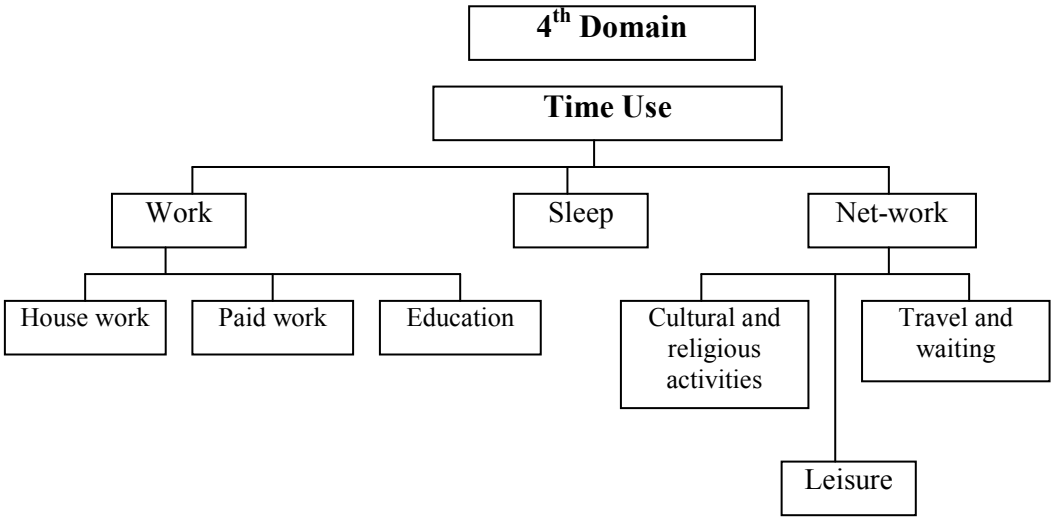
(Ministry of Education, 2010c, pp 15-19)

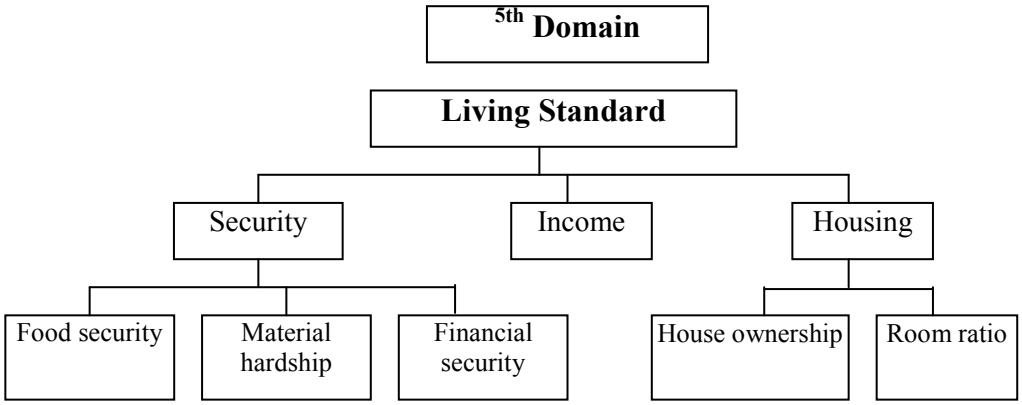


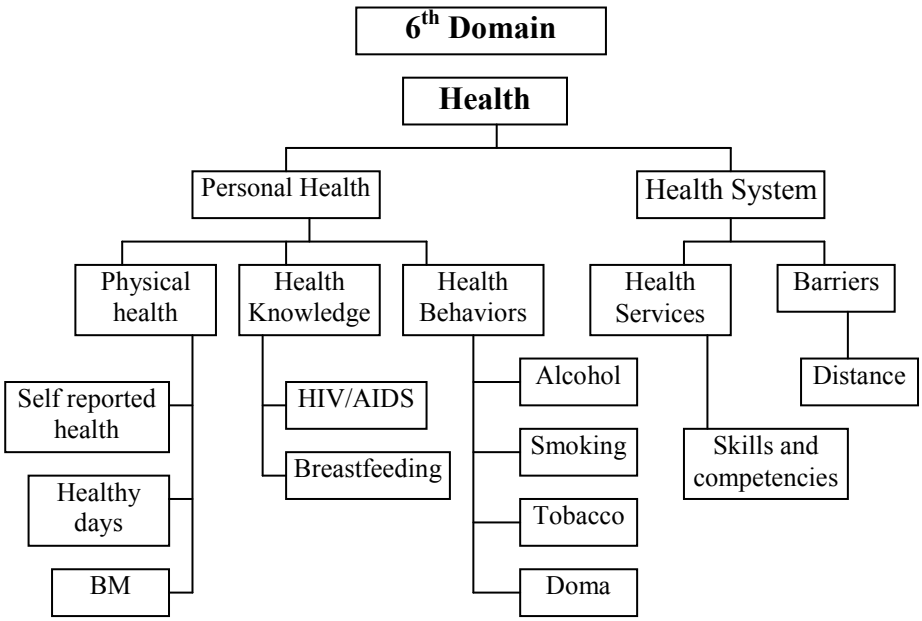


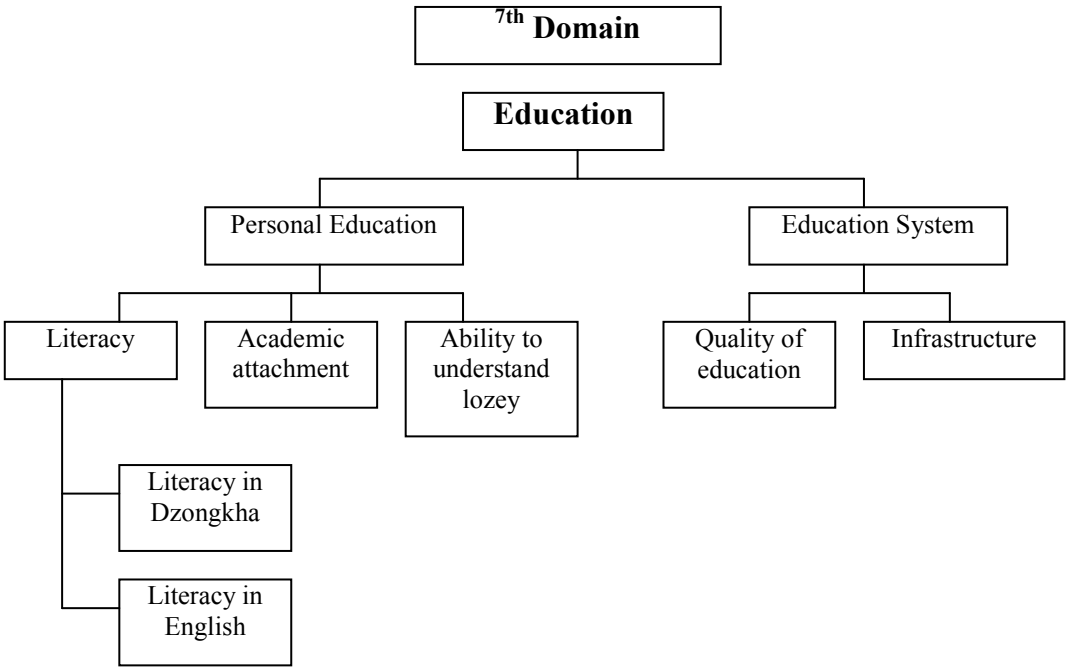

2nd Domain
Community Vitality
Neighborhood
Safety
Relationships
Social Support
Reciprocity
Human harm
Family
Friends
Availability of social support
Sense of belonging
Crime
Enmity
Labour exchange
Neighbors helping each other
Voluntary days
Community trust
Donation

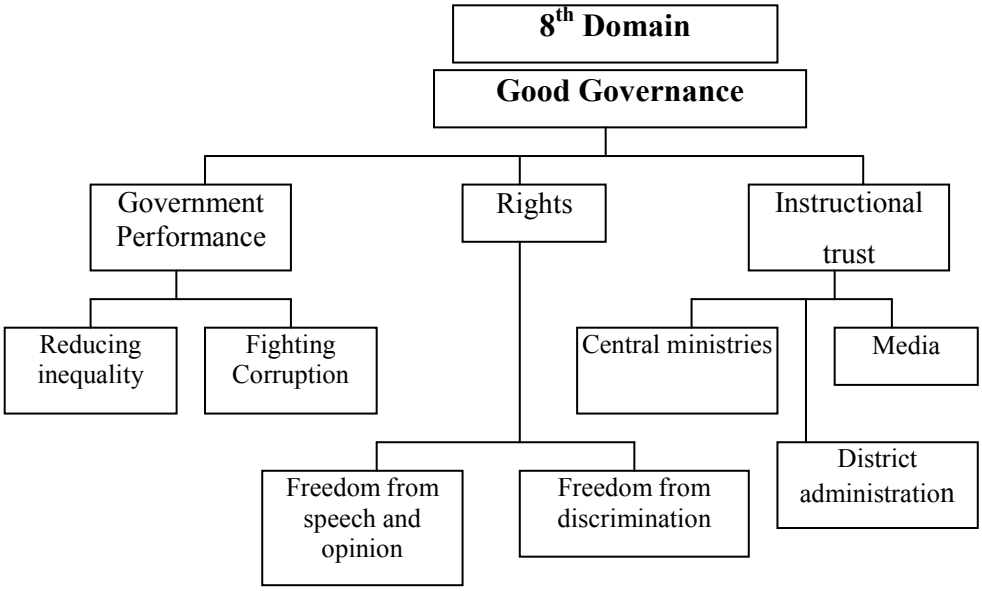

3rd Domain
Culture
Cultural Practices
Cultural Values
Language
Cultural events
Cultural Knowledge
Personal values
Societal values
Community festivals
Knowledge of mask and other dances
Attitudes towards lying
Societal values
Traditional recreation
Attitudes towards stealing
Societal values
Artisan skills
Attitudes towards killing
Societal values
Attitudes towards sexual misconduct

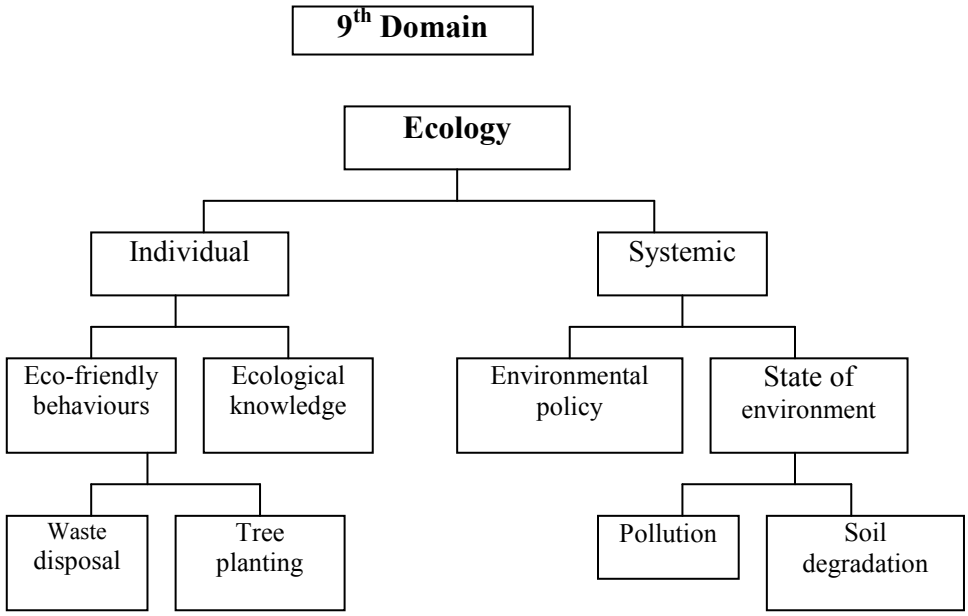

4th Domain
Time Use
Work
Sleep
Net-work
House work
Paid work
Education
Cultural and religious activities
Travel and waiting
Leisure


5th Domain
Living Standard
Security
Income
Housing
Food security
Material hardship
Financial security
House ownership
Room ratio


6th Domain
Health
Personal Health
Health System
Physical health
Health Knowledge
Health Behaviors
Health Services
Barriers
Self reported health
Healthy days
BM
HIV/AIDS
Breastfeeding
Alcohol
Smoking
Tobacco
Doma
Skills and competencies
Distance


7th Domain
Education
Personal Education
Education System
Literacy
Academic attachment
Ability to understand lozey
Quality of education
Infrastructure
Literacy in Dzongkha
Literacy in English


8th Domain
Good Governance
Government Performance
Rights
Instructional trust
Reducing inequality
Fighting Corruption
Central ministries
Media
Freedom from speech and opinion
Freedom from discrimination
District administration


9th Domain
Ecology
Individual
Systemic
Eco-friendly behaviours
Ecological knowledge
Environmental policy
State of environment
Waste disposal
Tree planting
Pollution
Soil degradation