



# SHES-RIG PAGES

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**The Biannual Newsletter of Samtse College of Education**



**Welcome**  
**Learning & Teaching**  
**Campus Life & Experience**

**Research Initiatives**  
**Events**  
**People Infocus**

**Body-mind Harmony**  
**Kalapinka-The voice**



# **SHES-RIG** PAGES

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## *Editorial team*

Dr. Sonam Rinchen, Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages  
Ms. Tshering Om Tamang  
Dr. Yangdon  
Dr. Tashi Gyeltshen  
Ms. Sangay Lhamo, Asst. Research Officer

# Welcome



Dear Reader,

Samtse College of Education (SCE) is pleased to present to you the 2023, Autumn edition of SHES-RIG PAGES, published biannually.

SCE was established and inaugurated on May 29, 1968 as a Teacher Training Institute (TTI) by our beloved Late His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. The launching of this premier teacher education institution then marked a significant epoch and milestone in Bhutan's history of educational development and more particularly, in the history of teacher preparation. From a fledgling Institute that initially ran a primary teaching certificate programme with a meagre enrollment of some 41 students only, SCE today has witnessed monumental growth and development offering a range of courses including a number of postgraduate teacher education programmes.

In the last 56 years of teacher education, SCE has educated close to almost two-thirds of the overall teaching population in the country. In fulfilling our mandate of educating teachers for the Bhutanese school system, we consciously seek inspiration in the wish and trust the Founding Father of this College had entrusted to the College of producing not only teachers that are professionally competent and dedicated but also immersed in our rich culture and heritage so that these timeless values can be transmitted to our younger generation.

As a teacher education college, SCE is committed to working with uncompromising commitment in crafting intelligent measures and interventions to transform the way we prepare teachers for 21<sup>st</sup>-century education. We consciously strive to challenge our existing practices to expand our horizons of learning and professional practice with a belief that the quality of teacher education and the professional competencies of teacher educators are the bedrock of a sound education system. Every teacher educator is encouraged to be ambitious, courageous, bold, determined, focused, disciplined, purpose-driven, resourceful, tactful, gritty, resilient, smart, intelligent, and astute in their efforts and attempts to model lifelong learning and excellence in teaching, research, publication, and a plethora of other professional and personal attributes.

Aligned with the current nationwide education reforms and higher education transformation initiated, the College is making every possible effort to push ourselves harder to address the current shortcomings by way of reviewing our teacher education curriculum to make it more current, relevant, effective, dynamic and forward-looking, and timeless in its application to produce a new generation of highly motivated teachers, counsellors, and social workers that are prepared to face the world of work. The College is also hopeful that within the 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan period, there will be some bold investments to support teacher education not just in the improvement of teacher education curriculum and teacher educators' capacity development but also in improving the existing infrastructure facilities to develop ourselves into a preferred teacher education destination for foreign students from Asia and other parts of the world.

SHES-RIG PAGES is a special tribute to the most sacred gift and precious legacy Late His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck has left for the education system in the country. This newsletter provides a snapshot of the variety of activities the College had initiated in the last one year as part of learning and teaching; research and other educational events; student experiences of campus life; and creative literary compositions.

We hope you will find this edition of the SHES-RIG PAGES interesting and read-worthy. The e-copy of the same can be accessed at [www.sce.edu.bt](http://www.sce.edu.bt).

With warmest wishes.

(Rinchin Dorji)

President

**SHES-RIG  
PAGES**

## UPSHIFT



*Facilitators and participants of UPSHIFT*

**A**s a follow-up to the introduction of the UPSHIFT Programme to the students of Samtse College of Education (SCE), sixty-one students from two Bachelor's programmes, namely Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW) and Bachelor of Education in Information Technology, English, History, and Geography (B.Ed IT & B.Ed Eng/His/Geo), actively participated in the UPSHIFT workshop held on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The workshop was facilitated by Ms. Sonam Zangmo, a faculty member in Psychology and Mr. Ugyen Dorji, a faculty member in Mathematics. Both facilitators had undergone a Training of Trainers workshop at the College of Science and Technology, Rinchending, Phuentsholing in June 2023.

Over the course of three weeks, the UPSHIFT workshop covered a range of topics including community mapping, stakeholder mapping, goal setting, prototyping, creative thinking, resource planning, ideation, feedback and iterations, final solutions, pitch preparation, and storytelling.

In the final session of the workshop, each group presented their final pitches through storytelling. The judging criteria included problem definition, feasibility, innovation, impact, and collaboration. The top three prototypes were selected, and each group had ten minutes to pitch their ideas, followed by a five-minute question-answer session. The facilitators, Ms. Sonam Zangmo and Mr. Ugyen Dorji, served as judges. The chosen prototypes will undergo further refinement through collaborative efforts with the facilitators.

One prototype from the top three will be selected to participate in the national-level competition organised by the Loden Foundation and UNICEF Bhutan.

During the workshop, participants were encouraged to reflect on how they could apply the knowledge and skills gained in their future workplaces. Sonam Pemo from B.Ed IT expressed, "This platform empowers youth to generate ideas and innovations that contribute to our community and country." Cheki Wangmo, also from B.Ed IT, shared, "It was an excellent platform to enhance my skills for supporting youth and society. I plan to create a positive impact by helping my students bring about positive changes in their communities." Tandin Selden, a student from the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work programme, found the three-day workshop engaging and filled with learning experiences. As a social worker, she emphasised how the workshop equipped her with essential communication and interaction skills applicable to her future career.



## The National School Curriculum Orientation

The National School Curriculum Orientation Programme 2023 was conducted at Samtse College of Education on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, catering to graduating M.Ed teachers. This event was organised by the School Curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development [MoESD]. Guided by insights from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the programme addressed the profound evolution of education. It shifted from the conventional methods anchored in the memorisation of religious texts and rote learning, embracing a contemporary paradigm anchored in Competency-Based Education (CBE) and the National Curriculum.

Historically, Bhutan's education system leaned heavily on memorisation and rote learning, with a predominant focus on religious texts. The advent of digital learning heralded a transformative departure from these traditional practices. This shift transcends mere content alteration; it encompasses the entire educational ecosystem, spanning settings, instructions, facilities, infrastructure, and teaching and learning methodologies. The changes in the education system necessitate a holistic approach. Traditional classrooms with chalkboards have given way to technologically advanced smart classrooms. Instruction methods now prioritise critical thinking, problem-solving, and the practical application of knowledge. Facilities and infrastructure have undergone upgrades to accommodate digital resources and interactive learning tools. The evolving demands of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century global job market, coupled with the rise of remote learning, mandate a shift towards skill-based education.

During the orientation, facilitators Amber Rai and Sonam Tshering highlighted the imperative

of digitalisation, the embrace of diversity, and the cultivation of self-regulated learning. The contemporary education system must equip students with skills that transcend geographical boundaries, preparing them for the challenges of a dynamic global landscape. Competency, a focal point of the orientation, was meticulously categorised into various types and elements. The programme highlighted the importance of integrating technology across pedagogy, content creation, curation, and assessment. The competency-based approach revolves around the practical application of knowledge and skills, gearing students for real-world challenges.

The role of technology in education has evolved. It is woven into pedagogy to elevate teaching methods, utilised in content creation to produce engaging and interactive learning materials, employed in content curation for a personalised learning experience, and incorporated into assessment tools that offer real-time feedback on students' performance.

In conclusion, the National School Curriculum Orientation Programme 2023 has not only set the stage but has acted as a catalyst for a transformative journey in education. The spotlight on Competency-Based Education and the integration of technology heralds a steadfast commitment to preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Equipped with innovative approaches, educators are now poised to shape a future generation that is not only adaptable and tech-savvy but also equipped with the indispensable skills for success in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

## Talk on Adolescent Health

On October 19, 2023, Dr. Yeshi Zam, a medical professional affiliated with Samtse District Hospital, delivered a pivotal discourse tailored for the first-year Bachelor of Education students, centering around the critical theme of "Adolescent Health." Recognising that the majority of these students are currently traversing the complex terrain of adolescence, Dr. Yeshi Zam highlighted the urgency of imparting comprehensive awareness about the multifaceted challenges prevalent in this distinctive age group.

In her address, Dr. Yeshi Zam explicated the significance of the adolescent period as a formative juncture and elucidated on the potential implications, including but not limited to depression, anxiety, and loneliness, when this developmental phase is not navigated with adequate attention. Dr. Yeshi also delved into the normalisation of sexual feelings towards the opposite sex during adolescence and addressed the pervasive issues surrounding body image and societal expectations. Notably, she emphasised the pronounced vulnerabilities faced by

young girls, increasing the risk of developing eating disorders such as binge eating disorder, anorexia, and bulimia nervosa.

Dr. Yeshi Zam suggested coping strategies for the students to navigate the difficulties of the adolescence stage. These included advocating for seeking assistance, undergoing counseling, maintaining personal journals, and prioritising restorative sleep. Urging students to refrain from substance abuse, she assured them of an environment where seeking help is not only encouraged but also essential.

In concluding her impactful presentation, Dr. Yeshi Zam expressed a heartfelt hope that the insights shared would empower the students to normalise conversations around adolescent health issues and foster a community of mutual support. The participants lauded its profound usefulness and timely relevance in addressing the pressing concerns inherent in adolescent health.



## Forging Global Bonds: A Successful Student Exchange Initiative with Edith Cowan University, Australia



*A group photo taken on ECU's field visit to Shivalaya Mandir*

A delegation comprising ten enthusiastic students and two distinguished professors from Edith Cowan University (ECU), Australia, recently concluded a rewarding exchange programme at Samtse College of Education (SCE), fostering enduring memories and fortified international connections.

Arriving on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Australian delegation received a warm welcome from Deans, programme leaders, and their Bhutanese “buddy” counterparts at the College Guest House. The reception featured a joyous cake-cutting ceremony, symbolising the initiation of a culturally enriching exchange.

Expressing their delight upon arrival, one of the visiting students remarked, “We are thrilled to have safely landed in this beautiful and secure place, Samtse, Bhutan.”

During their ten-day stay at SCE, the Australian guests actively participated in a diverse array of activities, spanning morning classes to community engagements. They embraced the opportunity for intensive knowledge sharing with their Bhutanese buddies. Reflecting on the exchange, Tandin Selden, a buddy from SCE, shared, “It was a privilege to engage professionally and learn from our Australian friends. Their unique perspectives have broadened our horizons.”

Dr. Sonam Rinchen, Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages, observed, “Students are meaningfully engaged in learning from each other, placing cultural exchanges, discussions, and collaboration at the core of their experience.” Sangay Dema, a BA Social Work student, expressed the value of interacting with foreign students and learning from the experience.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, as the Australian delegation bid farewell to their buddies at SCE, emotions ran high. Tears of sadness mingled with smiles of gratitude, filling the air as the exchange students and professors prepared to return home. SCE buddies shared tears and offered heartfelt prayers for the safe journey and bright future of their departing friends. The emotional farewell carried a sense of hope, with both parties eager to reunite for



*All set for a hike to Tiger's Nest*

future academic and cultural exchanges.

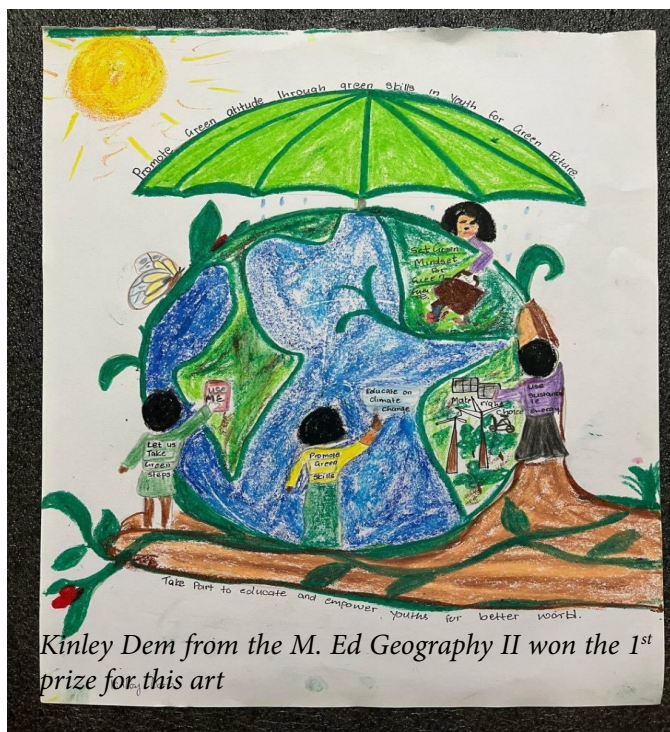
The visit of Australian students and professors to Samtse College of Education not only solidified international connections but also underscored the significance of cultural exchange programmes in fostering global understanding and cooperation. The memories created during this exchange will undoubtedly linger in the hearts and minds of all those involved.



*A group photo after ECU and SCE students presented their joint project*



## Y-peer Club Organised an Art Competition



**Y**-peer Club organised an art competition to celebrate International Youth Day on August 12, 2023. The competition saw together 20 talented students in a creative showcase of artistic expression. The competition on "Green skills for youth: Towards a sustainable world" aimed to engage the College students in activities that foster positive change and promote sustainability.

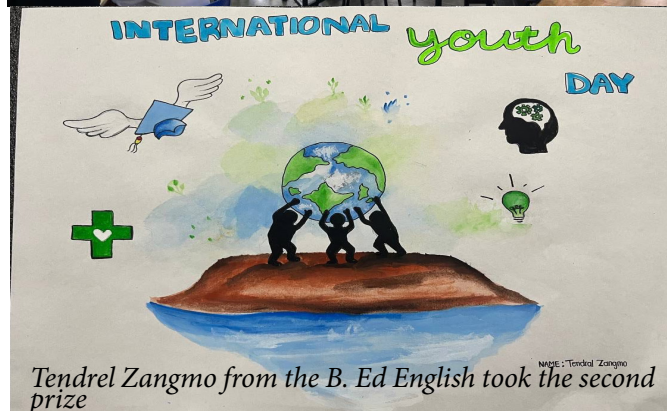
The event was a resounding success, drawing participants who used their artistic talents to explore and depict themes of environmental conservation, green technologies, and the importance of sustainable living. Each piece of art reflected the artist's commitment to making a difference in the world and showcasing their innovative thinking.

In recognition of their exceptional talent and commitment, the winners were awarded cash prizes. Kinley Dem from the M. Ed Geography II received the first prize, while Tendrel Zangmo from the B. Ed English and Geography and Tashi Dendup from

the B. Ed IT were awarded second and third prize respectively.

According to Sonam Deki, the Y-peer Club coordinator, the event was designed to provide the students the opportunities to engage in meaningful activities that promote positive change. She highlighted the importance of youth engagement in addressing global challenges including climate change, and emphasised that art could serve as a powerful medium to raise awareness and inspire action.

Sonam Deki expressed her gratitude for the enthusiastic participation of the students, fairness of the judges, and the support of the College administration for the successful conduct of the event. She hoped that the competition would inspire more young people to take an active part in creating a more sustainable and eco-friendly world.



## Educational Exploration: Sang-Ngag-Choeling Lower Secondary School Students visit Samtse College of Education

In a quest to broaden their perspectives and ignite academic curiosity, 47 class eight students from Sang-Ngag-Chhoeling (Chargharey) Lower Secondary School, accompanied by four teachers, visited Samtse College of Education on October 18, 2023. The primary objective was to familiarise the students with the college environment and its facilities, aiming to inspire them to consider higher education as a pathway toward leading fulfilling and purposeful lives. During their visit, the Dean of Academic Affairs provided insights into the courses offered by the College. The students toured various facilities, including classrooms, computer labs, the library, the science laboratory, and the hostels. Additionally, they participated in a brief mindfulness practice session led by Mr. Karma Gayphel, a faculty member from the Counseling Department. The visit concluded with a shared lunch at the College Mess, where students and accompanying teachers exchanged their experiences and newfound aspirations. This initiative not only provided a valuable opportunity for the College

and the School to strengthen collaboration but also fostered mutual engagement between the two educational institutions. One of the visiting students shared that “I have never been to SCE though I was born and raised in a nearby village. I am amazed by the facility in the college especially library. Who would not like to visit such as library? I would like to thank the college management and my school for arranging this visit la”



*Students visiting the Biology Laboratory*



*Mr. Karma Gayphel leading a mindful session*



## Y-Via and Y-Peer Clean Samtse Town on the International Youth Day



*A group photo comprising of Y-Via and Y-Peer team members on their cleaning day*

The SCE Y-Via and Y-Peer Club collaborated on a cleaning campaign to celebrate International Youth Day. The event, which aimed to promote positive change and sustainability, brought together over 40 enthusiastic students who tirelessly worked to spruce up the Samtse town. The success of the campaign was amplified by the generous contribution of Mr Jigme Jamtsho, a former teacher who currently resides in Australia. Mr. Jigme, deeply committed to fostering positive change and promoting sustainability, sponsored the event with a significant donation of Nu. 5000. His support facilitated buying necessary resources and refreshments for the day.

One of the key highlights of the campaign was its transformative impact on the local community. Not only did the students succeed in making Samtse town cleaner, they managed to gather the support and participation of local residents. This collective effort demonstrated the power of youth-led initiatives and acted as an advocacy programme that

encouraged the local population to actively engage in the preservation of their surroundings.

The SCE Y-Via coordinator, Dechen Tshomo expressed her satisfaction with the campaign's outcome, highlighting that it served as an excellent example of how youth-led initiatives can drive positive change. The coordinator emphasised that the event's influence extended beyond cleaning the town: it encouraged community participation and raised awareness about the importance of sustainable living.



## National Conference on STEM Education

The STEM Education Research Centre at Samtse College of Education hosted a transformative two-day National Conference on STEM Education from October 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The opening ceremony was graced by the Honourable Acting Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD). This significant event was organised as a part of the CL4STEM (Connected Learning for STEM) consortium project, generously funded by the IDRC (International Development Research Centre) through the GPE KIX initiative. The Conference served as a nexus for a diverse assembly of participants, including STEM educators, policymakers, school leaders, researchers, and representatives from esteemed stakeholders such as DHI InnoTech, Women for STEM Bhutan, and the Royal Society for STEM. Notably, faculties from the STEM department, M.Ed in STEM, and B.Ed IT students immersed themselves in the enriching discussions and sessions throughout the two-day conference.

At the heart of the National Conference on STEM Education was the dissemination of valuable insights and evidence-based practices derived from the CL4STEM initiative, which has been actively implemented in secondary schools within Samtse Dzongkhag. Participant Dorji Selden, pursuing a Bachelors in Education in Information and Technology, emphasised how the conference effectively communicated the innovative practices and profound impact of the CL4STEM project on the professional development and practices of STEM teachers.

A lecturer from the STEM division noted, “It provided a platform for stakeholders involved in STEM Education to share their experiences and expertise,” highlighting the collaborative spirit that permeated the event. According to Sonam Dorji, a participant pursuing a Master’s in Education in

maths, the conference facilitated the development of new collaborations and networking opportunities among STEM Education stakeholders in various STEM-related domains, including research. Sangay Wangmo echoed the sentiment, stating, “It gave us a platform to discuss issues concerning the prevailing state of STEM Education, generating strategies and approaches to advancing quality STEM Education in Bhutan.”

The National Conference on STEM Education, held at Samtse College of Education, emerged as a pivotal platform uniting stakeholders, fostering the enhancement and transformation of the standard of STEM education in Bhutan. The diverse agenda, insightful discussions, and networking opportunities have collectively charted a promising path for the advancement and enrichment of STEM education. This underscores the nation’s steadfast commitment to nurturing a dynamic educational approach deeply rooted in local values yet globally competitive for generations to come.



*Ms. Tashi Lhamo, Chief, Teacher Development Division, MoESD delivering Keynote address on Teachers’ Professional Development*





*Hon'ble Acting Secretary, MoESD gracing the conference*

## SCE Academics Present Papers at the International Forum

**D**r. Tashi Gyeltshen presented a paper titled Higher Education Institution Curricula and Graduate Competency for Sustainable Mountain Futures: A Case of Bhutan at the Second International Conference on Sustainable Mountain Development and Tourism on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023 held in Pokhara, Nepal.

The study assessed Bhutan's curriculum and graduate competencies for sustainable development, focusing on elements like sustainable mountain futures, community perspectives, and specific competencies such as awareness of sustainable development, ethno-science, and critical thinking. Data were gathered through tools such as curricula documents, focus group discussions, interviews with faculty and community members, and alumni perception surveys. The key findings reveal that student's demonstrated awareness, attributed to community influence and participation in sustainable development initiatives despite the limited content and discussion on sustainability in the programmes of study.

The other presenters in the conference came from countries such as the US, the UK, Australia, India, China, Japan, Poland, Pakistan, Chile, Nepal and

Bhutan. Besides the informal interaction during recess, Dr. Tashi led two important discussions as a result of the Conference. Firstly, there was a meaningful discourse on publishing the HUC project paper(s). Secondly, he met with Professor Laxman Gnawali of Kathmandu University and Professor Ganga Ram Gautam of Tribhuvan University to explore the establishment of the Bhutan English Language Teachers Association, considering the absence of such an association in Bhutan compared to other countries globally and in the SAARC region.

Similarly, Dr. Kinley Seden, Dr. Sonam Daker and Dr. Sonam Rinchen presented a paper on Gross National Happiness infused education in a seminar themed A rare glimpse into another world: Teacher education and beyond in Bhutan on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 at Aarhus University, Copenhagen, Denmark. The seminar was attended by faculty members from the Department of Educational Psychology and Department of Anthropology along with postgraduate students and visiting professors. The presentation was well received, sparking engaging discussions and interactions with the audience. The team also visited schools and universities both in Copenhagen and Aarhus and discussed possible areas of collaboration.



*Dr. Tashi Gyeltshen presenting his research paper during the conference*



*Dr. Kinley Seden leading the presentation on GNH infused education*



## Fostering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills through Educational Research

The 11<sup>th</sup> Student-Faculty Research Convention was held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023 based on the theme *Fostering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills through Educational Research* at Samtse College of Education. The convention was characterised by a diverse array of research presentations, with active participation from school teachers, esteemed faculty members, and enthusiastic students. These presentations vividly underscored the dynamic and multifaceted nature of research within the academic community at Samtse College of Education, reaffirming their unwavering commitment to the advancement of knowledge and innovation. The sessions were very interactive with questions of curiosity.

The highlight of the convention was a keynote address on “Research as the Engine of Learning and Growth; Research as the Powerhouse of Knowledge and Innovation.” by Dr. Rinchen Dorji, College President. In an insightful address, he delineated

twelve pivotal components imperative for the fruitful pursuit of research endeavors. The twelve key components of research highlighted by the keynote speaker were:

- *Identification of Research Topic*
- *Definition of the Research Problem*
- *Framing Research Aims and Objectives*
- *Research Purpose and Significance*
- *Comprehensive Literature Review*
- *Precise Framing of Research Questions*
- *Strategic Selection of Research Methodology*
- *Apt Selection of Data Collection Tools*
- *Meticulous Data Interpretation and Analysis*
- *Generation of New Knowledge*
- *Examination of Implications and Recommendations*
- *Upholding Research Ethics*

The keynote speaker Dr. Rinchen Dorji ardently conveyed that research is an enabler, capable of



The President, delivering his keynote address during the convention

# Research Initiative

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enhancing knowledge, skills, and innovation, reinvigorating both academics and students alike. Employing the evocative analogy of an ill-equipped soldier wielding obsolete weaponry in a modern battlefield, he underscored the urgency for academicians to possess the requisite research knowledge and skills to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of 21<sup>st</sup>-century education and global academia.

In his reflections on the event, Mr. Karma Chophel, an in-service M.Ed geography student, commented on the enriching learning experiences provided by the convention, asserting the necessity to create avenues for further exploration. Likewise, Mr. Sobit Pradhan, M.Ed physics student recognised

the convention's timeliness, offering participants an invaluable opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and collaborative learning. Dr. Sonam Rinchen, Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages highlighted that the convention was organised to enhance research knowledge and skills of the students and faculty so that one do not become obsolete in the realm of academic world.

The event concluded with the presentation of certificates to the participants, and the distinction of Dr. Sonam Daker as the best paper presenter, thus solidifying the College's commitment to rigorous academic inquiry and its transformative potential in the realms of education and global academia.



*Attendance for the 11<sup>th</sup> Faculty-Student Research Convention*



*Paper presenters responding to the questions from the audience*



## BUSF Showdown: A Tale of Triumph and Defeat



*Volleyball tournament between Samtse College of Education and College of Science and Technology (Girls)*

The Bhutan University Sport Federation event between the College of Science and Technology (CST), Gedu College of Business Studies (GCBS), and Samtse College of Education (SCE) was an exhilarating display of sportsmanship and competition. SCE hosted the home regional qualifying round on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October for CST and 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October for GCBS.

The event kicked off with CST visiting SCE on 14<sup>th</sup> October, where an array of sports, including football, basketball, volleyball, and archery were played. In the male categories, SCE faced tough competition and lost in three of the aforementioned sports. Although SCE also lost the basketball match in the female category and tied in football, the story took a twist in volleyball. SCE women's volleyball team displayed exceptional skills and emerged victorious, showcasing a proud moment for the host college. Additionally, SCE boys excelled in archery, adding another win to their tally.

The excitement continued as GCBS made their way to SCE for the next round. The male teams from GCBS proved their mettle, defeating SCE in football, basketball, and volleyball. It was a challenging day for SCE's male athletes. However, the SCE women's volleyball team once again displayed their prowess, securing a second win in this category. However, they lost the football and basketball match. The archery competition was no different, with SCE's archers emerging victorious.

BUSF event is conducted annually, with the RUB colleges taking turns to host the grand finale. The final event will take place at CST during the winter break. Such an event showcases a captivating blend of spirited competition, talent, and sportsmanship among the participating colleges. This event served as a poignant reminder of the role of sports in building relationships and providing students with a platform to excel in diverse athletic disciplines.

## Bridging Borders: An International Cultural Affair at the Pre-Thruebab Event

**O**n September 22, in a celebration filled with cultural vibrancy and international flair, the family of SCE and the honoured guests Associate Professor Vicki Banham and the Edith Cowan University (ECU) students, came together for the Pre-Thruebab (Blessed Rainy Day) Cultural Show.

The cultural dances performed by the students were brimming with energy and liveliness, captivating the audience from the very beginning. The variety show, which lasted for an hour and forty-five minutes, featured a diverse range of cultural performances. Amidst the festivities, a solo song titled "Dhi nge gi Gyalsem ee" by Karma Thinley Penjor was sung, paying tribute to the birth of the Royal Gyalsem.

ECU students surprised the spectators with a special item that served as an introduction to Australia's rich heritage. They shared the story of Gorilla, a legendary Australian Aboriginal rainbow serpent, and recited bush poems written by the renowned Australian poet, Dorothea Mackellar. The audience was enthralled as they sang along to the popular

Australian anthem, "We are Australia," showcasing their enthusiasm and appreciation for the cultural exchange.

Towards the end of the programme, Assistant Research Officer, Sangay Lhamo, delivered a heartfelt vote of thanks to express gratitude to the performers and the audience. She also took the opportunity to enlighten the international guests about the significance of the Blessed Rainy Day, which traditionally falls on September 24<sup>th</sup> this year.

The Blessed Rainy Day celebration, with its amalgamation of cultures and joyous performances, left an indelible mark on all who attended and flaunted the power of cultural exchange and the beauty of diversity, fostering a sense of unity and celebration among all present.



*ECU students performing an item as a part of the cultural event organised in their honour*



*SCE students performing a cultural dance*



## Harmony in Motion: Samtse College's 2023 Marathon Celebration



*A group of girls fuelled by determination*

Samtse College of Education hosted Annual Marathon on November 11, observing the 68<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, GNH Day, Constitution Day, and Children's Day. The event, strategically planned for faculty, staff, and students, aimed to foster unity and well-being.

The Marathon featured two categories: a 12km route for men and an 8km route for women. Taking place from 6:30 AM to 8:30 AM on the Samtse Gomtu by-pass road, a total of 139 participants, including enthusiastic faculty and staff, contributed to the spirited event.

In the men's category, the first-year B.Ed IT student, Sajay Chhetri, emerged as the winner, completing the 12km race in an impressive 57 minutes and 23 seconds, securing the top spot. Not far behind, Kinley Wangyel Gyeltshen and Dorji Khandu, also from B.Ed IT year I, secured the Second and Third positions, respectively.

Meanwhile, in the women's category, Dorji Seldon, a first-year B.Ed IT student, claimed victory by

completing the 8km race in 45 minutes and 19 seconds, earning the coveted first prize. Following her, Dechen Tshomo from the BA in Social Work (BASW) and Dawa Zam from B.Ed (Eng/His) year I secured the Second and Third positions, respectively.

The event, beyond its commemorative aspects, underscored the College's commitment to building a healthy and vibrant community. The impressive performances and enthusiastic participation reflected the College's dedication to promoting physical fitness and a strong sense of togetherness among its faculty, staff, and students.



*The College President with the winners of the Marathon*

## Celebrating success: Graduation Ceremony for M.Ed Batch of 2023

The M.Ed graduation ceremony was a memorable and joyous occasion for all, especially the graduating M.Ed students, batch of 2023. The event took place at the college auditorium, which was beautifully decorated with balloons, banners, and flowers.

The evening began with welcoming the graduates with trashi khadars, followed by a keynote address by the chief guest, Dasho Kencho Tenzin, the Deputy Managing Director of the Army Welfare Project. Several categories of awards including awards for academic excellence in respective subjects, best speakers in Dzongkha and English, sports and also certificates of appreciation to councillors, class representatives and club coordinators were awarded to the graduating class.

Two valedictorians, Kuenga Legpa and Yeshey Seldon shared about their learning experiences in the college. Cultural performances interjected in between the various prize and certificate awards created a celebratory mood. At the end of the programme the President, Dr Rinchen Dorji surprised the graduates with a heartwarming video message where he mentioned, "Your New qualification – Master of Education is not just a testament to your academic prowess but a symbol of your unwavering belief in the transformative power of education." He also shared that while celebrating the new achievement in their life as a schoolteacher, they should also remember to acknowledge the efforts, sacrifices and contributions each of them received from their family and friends, and tutors at the College.

Overall, the M.Ed graduation night was a wonderful celebration of hard work, dedication, and success. It was a fitting send-off for the graduates as they embark on the next chapter of their lives.



*President's message to graduates via zoom*



## An Interview with Associate Professor Vicki Banham (ECU)



**SHES-RIG PAGES (SP):** Please share with us about your role at ECU and your areas of expertise in academia?

**Professor:** I am a leader, educator and HDR supervisor at Edith Cowan University since 1992. I am committed to leading quality teaching, research, and professional involvement in areas of: listening and acknowledging the voice of people and communities in society and pathways to active participation; rights of vulnerable groups; understanding the learning process of children and young people; project management; curriculum development; coordination and administration; literature reviews; report writing; proposal writing; qualitative research methodologies and methods; social programme design and development; and strategic planning.

I have been awarded a Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching and Learning, and in 2019 the Australian Award for University Teaching: Citation for outstanding contribution to student learning. I have a number of leadership positions within the University including Chair of Department of Human Services; Head of School of Community Studies; and Associate Dean (Counselling, Social Work, Social Science, and Youth Work).

My expertise has been acknowledged in appointments to a Directorship for Ngala, Ministerial positions: Children's Advisory Council Western Australia; Child Care Planning Committee Western Australia; and Chair of Australian Accreditation Decisions Review Committee (10 years). I am a supervisor for Doctoral and Masters by Research students.

**SP: What motivated you to initiate the exchange programme with Samtse College of Education?**

**Professor:** I have had the wonderful opportunity to be involved with Samtse College of Education over a number of years. In 2017 I travelled to Bhutan as an ECU delegate and was fortunate to meet with a number of amazing people working in civil service organisations supporting vulnerable people, families, and communities across Bhutan, and met the President of Samtse College. In 2018 I visited Bhutan again as part of the ECU delegation when ECU signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Royal University of Bhutan. This MOU enabled me to work directly with Samtse College of Education and the concept of the Study Tours was born. I immediately set about applying to the Australian Government for National Colombo Plan (NCP) funding to bring students from ECU to Samtse College. I was also honoured to be invited to be on the Planning Committee for the International Conference on Emerging Social Work Practices & Education organised by Samtse College. In 2019, the conference was held at Samtse College which was attended by local and international participants. The Prime Minister also attended. The Samtse College delivered an excellent Conference.

As we were successful in obtaining funding for 15 ECU students to come to Samtse College on an exchange

programme and we arrived in September 2019 for two weeks. Although we were successful in obtaining funding for 2020, the programme had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. With COVID -19 over, we were able to come to Samtse College.

**SP: How do you believe this exchange programme benefited both ECU and Samtse College of Education?**

**Professor:** The exchange programme exposed the students to experiencing different points of view on similar topics; enabled them to explore issues through a broad range of sociological lenses; built friendships and networks that have the opportunity to develop further over time; challenged them, especially the ECU students, to think critically and objectively when exposed to situations that challenged them; and enabled knowledge transfer to occur in a natural setting.

**SP: What challenges did you face in organising and facilitating this exchange programme?**

**Professor:** One of the main challenges in the delivery of this exchange programme is the process of actually arriving in the country, relating to obtaining flights in and out of Bhutan from Australia at the time we needed them. However, this is to be expected and we were very well supported through the dedicating work of President Dr Rinchen and his team, Madam Sangay, and Dr Sonam Rinchen. As this is the second time, we have collaborated with Samtse College of Education in an exchange programme, we did not experience as many of the challenges this time.

**SP: Could you share some memorable experiences or lessons learned during your time in Samtse and in Bhutan?**

**Professor:** This is a difficult question as there are so many memorable experiences to call upon. If I were to recall a very memorable experience whilst I was in Bhutan this time, it would most definitely be meeting Her Majesty, The Queen Mother Sangay Choden Wangchuck and talking with her in regard to one of her flagship programmes being with RENEW (Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women). The student presentations were another great highlight, to see the high level of collaboration that occurred between Samtse buddies and their ECU counterparts. I think both Dr Rinchen and I were most proud of the group. The community visits were also a memorable experience, listening to the feedback from the students in them challenging their thinking and beliefs, the laughter and knowledge being shared, and the learning that was taking place. Oh yes and the final night dinner with everyone, lots of tears!! However, I very much enjoyed meeting with Dr Rinchen and the team at Samtse College again.

**SP: In your opinion, what cultural and educational differences between Australia and Bhutan impact the students' learning experiences?**

**Professor:** I would suggest that the process of learning new knowledge and consolidating current knowledge is universal across all cultures. What may be different is the strategies used to transmit that knowledge. I do not see any major differences across Bhutan and Australia here. Cultural understanding is a little more complex as when we move into another culture, and immerse ourselves in that culture, we are challenged in what we see and hear, as we attempt to make meaning of what we hear and see. Such challenges are not vulnerability but an opportunity to reflect, critically analyse one's own thinking and beliefs, and create new knowledge, to obtain an objective understanding of the culture norms, mores, and beliefs. Yes, such challenges do impact in student



learning but in a positive way.

**SP: Can you highlight any specific academic or cultural activities that were part of this exchange programme?**

**Professor:** The cultural programme, from arrival to departure, was very carefully and collaboratively planned for students (ECU and Samtse) to ensure transfer of knowledge would have the opportunity and space to occur. I consider it was an excellent programme that did indeed enable this to occur. Dr Sonam Rinchen and I are in the process of evaluating the programme so as to provide learning for the next programme.

**SP: What advice would you give to other professors or educators considering similar international exchange programmes?**

**Professor:** This presents a valuable learning opportunity for students, contingent upon thorough organisation with structured assessments, clear accountability, and wholehearted engagement from both students and their leaders. It's imperative to acknowledge this as a collaborative endeavour between institutions, with careful consideration given to the selection process for participating students.

**SP: In your opinion, how does international exposure through exchange programmes contribute to the personal and academic growth of students?**

**Professor:** It provides an amazing opportunity for students to gain a greater knowledge and understanding of another country that may be different to their own – socially, culturally, economically, and politically. It can assist in their employability as employers value adaptability, cultural awareness, tolerance and so-called “transversal skills”, meaning one can be curious, confident and generally, a problem solver. Through immersing in another culture, a student becomes more flexible in their thinking as they experience different value, language, and cultural systems. More importantly they can become more adaptable to cultural differences in their home country. The students also have the opportunity to create new networks and develop collaborations, both personal and professional.

**SP: How has the exchange programme experience influenced your teaching or research approach?**

**Professor:** The importance and power of collaboration, to work alongside colleagues from a different institution who are teaching and researching in the same or similar field – the power of sharing knowledge cannot be underestimated.

**SP: Do you have any other points to share?**

**Professor:** Yes, we are planning for a return in 2024.  
Thank you Samtse for your warm hospitality.

## Winner of the President's Award for Outstanding Student Leadership



*Kuenga Legpa (R) receiving award from Dasho Kencho Tenzin (L)*

**SHES-RIG PAGES (SP):** Congratulations for winning the 2023 President's Outstanding Student Leadership award for 2023. How did you feel on winning this award?

**Kuenga Legpa (KL):** Thank you so much! Winning the 2023 President's Outstanding Student Leadership award is truly an unexpected and remarkable honour. I am genuinely surprised, especially considering it's the first time this award has been bestowed upon a M.Ed student. This recognition has left me feeling humbled and incredibly motivated to redouble my efforts and continue contributing to the community through my leadership initiatives.

**SP:** Did you expect to receive this award? What preparations did you undertake to achieve this feat?

**KL:** To be honest, I didn't anticipate receiving this award, and I hadn't specifically prepared for it. However, I believe my success stems from consistently meeting the expectations of the role I was assigned. I dedicated my efforts to fulfilling my responsibilities, staying motivated, and ensuring that neither failures nor external circumstances disrupted my focus and determination.

**SP:** Were you aware of the criteria to be eligible for this award?

**KL:** No, I wasn't aware of the criteria. I noticed the award given to a B.Ed counselor last year, leading me to assume it was exclusive to B.Ed and PgDE students. However, upon the recent announcement, I learned it was open to all categories.

**SP:** Who would you dedicate this award to?

**KL:** I would like to dedicate this award to my daughter, Karma Euphel Choden, and my wife who missed my presence during the two long years. Additionally, I extend this dedication to my parents and other family members for their unwavering support and encouragement. I am grateful to the President, lecturers, and faculty for their guidance, as well as to all my M.Ed friends for entrusting me with the role of councilor and for their cooperation.

**SP:** Are there individuals or mentors who played a significant role in your journey and to whom you would like to express gratitude?

**KL:** As I mentioned earlier, it's the collective encouragement of everyone I listed above. However, if I were to



highlight one individual from the college, it would be Mr. Ramesh Kumar Chhetri, Dean of Student Affairs. I worked closely with him, and he placed a great deal of trust in me. I always felt a sense of responsibility not to let him down.

**SP: Can you share a memorable experience or event from your time in college that stands out to you?**

**KL:** While there are many cherished memories from my college days, a standout experience was during the National STEM Conference. I took on the roles of both MC and organiser, adding to the challenge as a STEM student and Councilor. Simultaneously, we were hosting BUSF, adding another layer of responsibility. The weeks leading up to the events involved intense planning, late-night meetings, and coordination with various stakeholders. Despite the demanding nature, both the National STEM Conference and BUSF games were a resounding success. The energy, excitement, and the sense of achievement from smoothly coordinating these events made it an unforgettable chapter in my college journey. It was a testament to the power of determination, proving that where there's a will, there is indeed a way

**SP: How does it feel to have won the President's Award, and what does it mean to you?**

**KL:** Winning the President's Award is an incredibly humbling and profound experience. I am deeply grateful to those who recognised my leadership qualities, even though I feel I couldn't contribute as much as I would have liked. For me, this honour serves as a calling to strive for an even better version of myself. It is a ticket that encourages me to learn more and do more, fostering a commitment to continuous growth and contribution.

**SP: Can you highlight some of the key achievements that led to you receiving the President's Award?**

**KL:** While I may not have an exhaustive list, reflecting on my journey, I believe my dedication to duty played a crucial role. Taking my responsibilities as a student and councilor seriously, I embraced challenges, dared to take risks, and, with the support of those around me, managed to navigate them successfully. I actively took on hosting programmes and positioned myself as a successful intermediary, fostering effective communication between the college administration and students.

**SP: What is your advice to young and upcoming leaders who aspire to become leader like you?**

**KL:** While I don't consider myself a great leader to give advice, in my view, an effective leader is someone who dedicates themselves wholeheartedly to their role, regardless of its scale. Understand that not everyone may always like or agree with you, and it's okay to acknowledge mistakes or face failures – the key is to learn from those experiences. Personally, I prioritise building strong connections within my team whenever I take on a leadership role. Establishing genuine connections fosters a collaborative and supportive environment that is crucial for achieving shared goals. Additionally, it's essential to strive to make everyone feel that the team's goal is their own, promoting a sense of collective ownership and commitment.

## College Bid Farewell to Two Senior Faculty

**I**n November 2023, Samtse College of Education bid a heartfelt farewell to Professor Dr. Nandu Giri and Mr. Tandin Penjor. The College President expressed gratitude for their dedicated service and extended best wishes for their future endeavours.

Dr. Nandu Giri, a devoted member since 1987, made significant contributions over his 36-year tenure, including pioneering chemistry modules, streamlining Teaching Practice, and serving as the first Dean of Student Affairs. He was also the first faculty from Samtse College of Education to earn a PhD and played a key role in designing the M.Ed science and maths programme. He also served as M.Ed Chemistry Education Programme Leader. Dr. Nandu Giri received a gold medal from His Majesty the King in 2013 for his dedicated service in the teaching profession.

Mr. Tandin Penjor, who joined in 2008, excelled in various roles, including Head of STEM Department and M.Ed Physics Education Programme Leader. His notable contributions encompassed the development of an online assessment model for School Immersion and Teaching Practicum, managing Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in the college, and training faculty in digital IT skills. Their departure creates a substantial void in the college, and their absence will be keenly felt by both faculty and students.



*Professor Dr. Nandu Giri (C) sharing his parting words during the farewell dinner, College President (R) and Mr. Tandin Penjor (L)*



## Energising Aerobic Dance Exhibition

The College aerobic club organised a sensational aerobic dance exhibition on November 15, 2023. The exhibition brought together the students and faculty for a fun-filled celebration of physical fitness and wellbeing. The exhibition was a spectacle of energy and enthusiasm, showcasing the talents of the club members.

The exhibition aimed to promote physical fitness and unite the College community in a shared commitment to a healthier lifestyle. The participants were treated to an array of captivating dance performances that not only entertained but also inspired a collective sense of health and wellness.

The College faculty members and the students came out in impressive numbers, filling the venue with excitement and positive vibes. It was a sight to behold as the College community came together to foster a sense of unity through the joy of movement. The aerobic club coordinator, Yeshi Seldon, emphasised how the crucial role aerobic plays in promoting physical fitness, fostering a sense of unity, and nurturing shared health goals within the College community. According to her, the exhibition served as a powerful source of motivation and inspiration, encouraging individuals to embark and continue their fitness journey.



*Aerobic club coordinator, Yeshi Seldon instructing the participants*

## Rover Scouts Observed the International Peace Day

The SCE roverscouts observed the International Peace Day with the theme 'Actions for peace: Our ambition for the global goals,' on 21 September 2023. The programme aimed to promote harmony, peace, and sustainable development. A number of zealous individuals including exchange programme international students from Edith Cowan University in Australia participated in various events to demonstrate their dedication to fostering world peace.

The programme began with Surya Namaskar yoga session in the early morning by the aerobic club coordinator. Yoga is well-known for enhancing both mental and physical health. One of the highlights of the programme was the "Messenger of Peace" dance performed by the rover scouts conveying a powerful message of unity and harmony.

The peace pledge video competition was conducted to encourage the participants to document their personal commitments to the promotion of peace. The video clips were inspiring and thought provoking, emphasising that every individual has a role to play in making the world a better place.

A symbolic "Peace Tree" was another striking feature of the event. The tree, adorned with messages of peace and goodwill, served as a testament to the shared aspirations for a harmonious world. The participants wrote messages, quotes, and wishes on colourful cards hung on the tree, creating a visual representation of their collective commitment to peace.

The event concluded with a "Peace Talk" by the Dzongkhag Scout Secretary. He emphasised the significance of International Peace Day in a world where conflicts and inequalities persist. He concluded the speech by calling on everyone present to actively work towards achieving the UN sustainable development goals, highlighting

the crucial role scouts can play in advancing these global objectives.

Through yoga, dance, pledges, and dialogue, the participants demonstrated that small actions can collectively lead to significant changes. International Peace Day 2023 reminded that, regardless of individual backgrounds and beliefs, all aspire for global peace and bright future.



*Messengers of peace*



*Yoga group posing for a group photo after the session*



## So it Stays

Trust me when I say,  
my heart has never hurt this bad  
it's a brief sharp throb  
right in my heart  
and it crawls away from it  
creeps all over my chest  
until I cannot breathe anymore.  
It travels and travels  
until it reaches my fingertips  
until it reaches my toes  
until it exits my body.  
Tears?  
I think that's what people call it  
when the ache escapes your body.  
I wipe my eyes and tell myself  
"there you go, it's gone now"  
only to look down on my pillow  
and see perfect circles  
assembled by my tears  
Is it by mistake or by design?  
I don't know, all I know  
is that the tears on my pillow  
are harder to wipe away  
than the tears on my face  
and so it stays.



**Ugyen Lhaden**  
B.Ed Information and Technology

## Tomorrow

I see no hope for future  
And so I fear the future  
Wishing towards the past  
Tomorrow, please don't come.

As the moon sets, the sun rises  
I need to face tomorrow again  
Leaving the old me behind  
Not wanting tomorrow to come.

I tried to hope for change  
But the future was too cruel  
Although time stops for no one  
I don't want tomorrow to come.

I have never forgotten  
Daydreaming about the past  
Not knowing life's cruelty  
I begged tomorrow not to come.

I think about how I wanna go back  
So shooting star, I shout out to you!  
Whatever and wherever you are  
Never send me to tomorrow.



**Jangchuk Dorji**  
B.Ed English and History

## Ripples

The power words hold,  
evoking deep emotions,  
Creating substantial waves,  
Deep within the pond of hearts.

Words are like pebbles,  
Heart is a pond.  
Throw it at someone,  
And rings of ripples form deep within.

Choose your words wisely,  
For in the pond of hearts,  
Words are like pebbles,  
creating vast ripples.



**Karma Dechen Tshering**  
B.Ed English and Geography

## The Irony of Life

Funny how even the deep ocean craves the rain.  
Funnier how a shattered heart can still lust for pain.  
An ocean with no colour, just shades of blue and green.  
The whole world is full of horror and people chasing dreams.

I chose 'funny' to navigate this story of life.  
Where laughter becomes shields against cruel winds.  
It is a paradoxical dance when pain mixes with gentle humour.  
I choose 'funny', where tears and laughter intertwine.  
I choose 'funny' to view this life.



**Reshma Rai**  
B.Ed English and Geography

## The Room

No door, no window  
I find no exit.  
Every air I inhale  
Is one breath lost.  
The longer I stay,  
The darker it becomes.  
So, how long am I to be trapped?

Did I say the room grows smaller?  
Four walls closing in.  
Days, weeks, months-  
It is still dark in here.

I let out a desperate scream  
'Cause I need somebody to pull me out.  
But only no one hears me  
For my screams are only sighs.

Yet something warm and soft  
Holds me by my hand in the dark.  
With four walls only inches away,  
No longer do I feel the ground beneath me.



**Sangay Thinley**  
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