Akelius Project to aid monastic students in learning English

June 26th, 2023

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In the next two years, 1,400 nuns and monks in 14 monastic institutions will have access to English language learning on the smart devices distributed through Akelius Project. Tsugla Lopon of the Zhung Dratshang, Karma Rangdrol launched the project in Thimphu on June 23.

According to UNICEF, the launch of the Akelius project will help students learn languages in a fun way with interactive content in a gamified learning environment.

"Foundational literacy skills are critical for children to thrive in school and beyond. We hope the project will foster an interest in learning English for monks and nuns while improving the digital skills of children and teachers", said the representative of UNICEF, Andrea James.

Over the span of two years, the Akelius learning course will be given access to 1,400 monks and nuns from 14 monastic institutions, which will help improve their English language competency digitally. This project will help enhance the proficiency of 26 teachers in monastic schools in blended teaching and learning approaches.

The Tsugla Drungchen, Kuenga Penjor said, for the pilot project it will be conducted in seven monastic schools; Phochu Dumra, Nalanda, Hongtsho nunnery, Talakha Goenpa, Eutok Goenpa, and Tencho nunnery.

Dratshang Lhentshog and UNICEF launched the Dratshang Management Information System (DMIS), which holds the national database for the monastic body.

According to a UNICEF press release, DMIS was initiated to increase the nation's capacity to gather, manage, and apply education data to achieve quality, inclusive education for monks and nuns and to strengthen the management of data on monks, nuns, and monastic schools.

"The launch of DMIS has set a precedent for the monastic body to embrace innovative ways to learn and preserve culture," said Tsugla Lopon.

The Council of Monastic Education and Research's Drungchen (secretary), Kuenga Penjor said that the DMIS system will help drive the system with wide innovations, accountability, professionalisation, and quality and learning.

The use of this system will help save the data of nuns and monks of the dratshang, recording their personal data, information of students, socio-economic status, health status, institute information, the progress of each student, ranking of the institute, attendance of students and dropouts.

It will assist in assuring quality data and information-processing for evidence-based planning, decision-making, interventions, research, monitoring, and evaluation to all stakeholders, he said.