

# THE LODEN REPORT

Losar 2021



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The gift of knowledge is the best gift.

-The Buddha in Dharmapada, XXIV.21



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**“Each of our children must embody the fine blend and balance of our native grit and intellect with acquired knowledge and skills to survive and prosper as individuals and as members of our national community.”**

**- His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck**

*Excerpt from His Majesty The King's Royal Kasho on Education Reform issued on 01 February 2021*



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kuzuzangpo La!

2020, the Year of Iron Rat has been a year of deep reflection and swift action. As the Covid-19 pandemic gripped the world and even remote Bhutan, which sealed its borders in March, went through lockdown twice, we were made to meditate on the fragility of life, global interdependence, and above all on ways to be more dynamic, resilient and compassionate in a crisis.

In the wake of the pandemic, I personally cancelled all international teaching engagements, in course of which we have planned to reach out to our foreign supporters. Instead, being grounded in Bhutan, I could work with the office team on a wide range of Covid-19 response initiatives from social media campaigns for social distancing and, distribution of face masks to development of TV school lessons and organizing virtual education forums.

In spite of the serious disruptions and challenges posed by the pandemic or perhaps provoked by it, Loden saw a highly productive and fulfilling year in terms of beneficial interventions. This is partly because Bhutan was spared a serious health crisis thanks to exemplary leadership and community solidarity. With the help of many partners, who are equally nimble and smart, we supported 30 social enterprises, most of them to address new challenges posed by Covid. Such businesses include production of face masks, collection of waste from quarantine centres, virtual learning tools, delivery of food, etc. Supporting small businesses became critical as Bhutan witnessed an economic downturn, thereby exacerbating the serious problem of unemployment.

We also carried out trainings when the situation allowed and successfully awarded 8 scholarships in the field of medicine. While our preschools remained closed, the facilitators took care of the children remotely. However, the students we support in schools and colleges had their study seriously affected and it is our hope they can make it up in the new year. Our cultural work of documentation was also hampered although the relatively free movement in the rural areas allowed us to successfully complete the eco-cultural project of conserving a sacred lake and processing audio-visual recordings that we have already created.

As we plough our way through the pandemic and its consequences, we hope the 2021 Year of Iron Ox will bring us fresh stamina and strength, and open a new era of resurgence. For that, we count on your blessings and support as always.

With our deepest prayers for global recovery from Covid, your good health and well being.

Lopen Karma Phuntsho  
Founder and President

## NOTE FROM AFAR

For a good number of years, we have been invited to write these notes from afar. This year, as we write this, Portugal has just entered a second lockdown, and Bhutan seems very far away. We don't know when we can return to Bhutan. Yet at the same time, we were constantly connected virtually, sometimes on a daily basis, sharing the feeling of urgency created by the pandemic. We have scarcely felt more connected. This is the paradox of our time; feeling both afar and yet very close. Because the pandemic does not recognize borders, we can understand that we are in this difficult journey together.

The slogan "a crisis is an event far too precious to be wasted" has been heard by the Loden team, within and outside Bhutan. The number of projects supported has reached a new high. With the Loden Emergency Fund announced in December 2020, we have also taken up the responsibility to support existing Loden entrepreneurs to ensure that good businesses do not shut down or face extreme difficulties due to challenges caused or worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. Towards this, new funding has been secured from both within and outside Bhutan. If the present crisis has given us a lesson, it is the importance of education, resilience, and solidarity.

Anne and Gérard Tardy  
Trustees





## LODEN EDUCATION INITIATIVE

58

undergraduate  
scholarships provided  
since 2012

189

children from low-income  
families sponsored since  
1999

600+

children graduated from  
the early learning centres  
since 2008

33

Bhutan Dialogue sessions  
held since 2017

A young monk reading through books donated by Loden at  
their library in Jakar Dzong, Bumthang





## LODEN EARLY LEARNING CENTRES

The first six years in a child's life are the most formative. Providing the right care and mental stimulation during these early years will give children the confidence that they need to get an early start in their lives. Although early childhood care and development has gained importance in Bhutan, children in rural areas lack access to early learning facilities. The Loden Early Learning Centre programme was initiated in 2008 to ensure that children in rural Bhutan receive the same early learning opportunities as children in urban areas.

This year, educational institutions were shut down in response to the spread of Covid-19. Our facilitators adapted to the circumstances and continued to teach children virtually so that the learning would not be hindered. We remain committed to using the lessons learned during these unprecedented times to re-think and re-strategize the way we prepare our children for mainstream education. We thank UNICEF Bhutan for supporting the capacity building training of our facilitators in January 2020. The training programme on communications and fundraising at the Bhutan Media and Communications Institute (BMCI) and in-house training at Loden office helped prepare our facilitators for the unforeseen closure of all educational institutions across Bhutan.

**We are grateful to UNICEF Bhutan and the Ministry of Education for their continued partnership and support.**

### LODEN ELC AT A GLANCE

TOTAL CENTRES ESTABLISHED

5

TOTAL CHILDREN ENROLLED IN 2020

103

TOTAL CHILDREN GRADUATED IN 2020

71

## LEARNING EARLY AND VIRTUALLY

In an effort to avoid the spread of Covid-19 in educational institutions, the Ministry of Education instructed that all educational institutions remain closed in March 2020. This meant that our centre at Norbugang in Samtse was also closed just as we were preparing to welcome new children for the academic year 2020. My co-facilitator, Ms. Hema Limbu, and I heard of many solutions that were being devised for remote education ranging from online classroom tools like Google Classroom, to Zoom and Instant Messengers.

Therefore, we worked closely with parents to set a structured routine for the children at home. We regularly contacted parents and encouraged them to balance time between smartphones and play for their kids during lockdown. As our centres did not open for the whole academic session for 2020, this became our biggest challenge. Since our children are used to physical activities during their usual sessions, we had to rethink the whole process to engage them. We encouraged them to play a game that everyone could participate. Sorting and nesting toys work very well for infants and toddlers and hone their motor skills. Jigsaw puzzles and memory games are a great tool for building logical thinking among preschoolers. We also encouraged using board books with bright pictures and text for little ones, animal themed illustrated books for preschoolers and adventure series with their favourite character for the older ones to read along and enjoy. Parents were encouraged to dress up and enact their favourite part from the story and turn the room into a magical forest, an underwater world, or even an exciting zoo even during lockdown.

We noticed that parents were inspired to keep their kids' creativity flowing as they dabble in drawing and colours because this provided them with an excellent time to bond as a family. As teachers, we shared news about Covid-19 in a responsible manner via parents since preschoolers and older children will be inquisitive and have a lot of questions.

Finally, we passed on the message to parents to listen to children and ask them what they want to know and to share good hygiene tips like washing hands regularly. We reassured them that they are safe at home where everyone is staying indoors and clean and discouraged them to avoid having the TV on at all times with news channels sharing minute-by-minute updates.

Manju Subba  
ELC Facilitator  
Norbugang, Samtse

### HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT?

Here are a few ways you can support our early learning centers:

- Donate used or new educational toys
- Donate used or new reading materials for children below 5 years old
- Volunteer your time to read story books to our children

**Get in touch with us at [lodenfoundation@loden.org](mailto:lodenfoundation@loden.org)**







## LODEN CHILD SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME

Child sponsorship became Loden's first activity in 1999 when Loden's Founder and President, Lopen Karma Phuntsho, facilitated a small donation from Mr. Rob Miles in the United Kingdom to help a child living in rural Bhutan to complete her education. Despite state-financed education, low-income families in Bhutan still face difficulties sending their children to school as they cannot afford to pay for expenses such as school uniforms, stationery, sports gear, etc. Difficulties such as these deprive children of a normal childhood and school going experience.

Our child sponsorship programme is two-fold: we find either a sponsor or a child as requested; and then channel and administer the funds efficiently to pay for the school-related expenses. Once a child is enrolled in our programme, we want to make sure that we see this through. In 2020, with the generous support of our donors, we were able to sponsor seven additional children in five districts.

At present, we are sponsoring 89 children. We are grateful to all our donors, both within and outside Bhutan, for their generous support.

### LODEN CHILD SPONSORSHIP AT A GLANCE

TOTAL CHILDREN SUPPORTED IN 2020

7

DZONGKHAGS WHERE CHILDREN ARE SPONSORED

15

## HOPE

My name is Karma Lhamo and I have been teaching in Mongar for over 25 years. I have been volunteering for Loden as a focal for the Loden Child Sponsorship Programme.

It all started in 2010 when I heard about a child in Tongsing who was being raised by a single mother along with two of his siblings. His father had passed away and his mother could not afford the school expenses for all three children. I was already aware that Loden provided support to children in such situations, and so I reached out to Lopen Karma Phuntsho. From then on, teachers and parents approached me whenever they felt that Loden could provide the support. In total, I have connected 12 children with Loden and hope to support many more.

The children that are currently being sponsored by Loden are from low-income households, and most are being raised by single mothers who have at least three children. Some even come from families where both parents are alcoholics.

These children have low self esteem and are discriminated. They also appear emotionally burdened to see their family struggle. I've also seen that children's personalities reach extremes - quiet children become even more withdrawn, more dominant personalities become bullies. With support, however, I have seen (and other teachers tell me) that children are more motivated, feel better about themselves, and perform better academically. In short, the support helps them not only go to school like any other child but grow up healthy.

On behalf of the children and the wider community, I would like to thank the Loden Foundation and its supporters, and look forward to their continued support.

Karma Lhamo  
Teacher  
Mongar Lower Secondary School

### HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT?

You can sponsor a child's education by making a donation as follows:

- One annual donation of Nu. 6,000 for primary school and Nu. 8,000 for high school student
- Monthly donation of Nu. 500 per month supports one child's education for a year (deducted automatically from your authorized bank account in Bhutan)

Get in touch with us at [lodenfoundation@loden.org](mailto:lodenfoundation@loden.org)



Karma with her students in Mongar

*"The difference in the lives of the children are clearly visible and for me, personally, it is a morally rewarding experience. Thanks to Loden's support, children have been able to complete their higher secondary education. One child who we sponsored till class 10 is now employed as a caregiver at a central school."*

- Karma Lhamo





## LODEN YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

At the core of all our education initiatives is the motto that knowledge is without an owner and everyone is entitled to it. Driven by this motto, we started supporting deserving Bhutanese youth to ensure that cost would never be a barrier between a young person and their education. We provide financial support and educational guidance to youth who, despite possessing the drive and academic merit, are unable to pursue their higher education because they lack the funds. We give preference to young people who are determined to study courses that will fill the gap in the country.

This year, the Covid-19 pandemic was a stark reminder of the shortage of medical personnel in Bhutan. Bhutan has only half of the WHO's requirement of doctor per thousand population. So, for this year's scholarship programme, we prioritised students that opted for medical degrees and supported eight students to pursue medical studies within and outside Bhutan.

We are grateful to our supporters, whose generosity has enabled us to provide scholarships. In particular, we thank the AKO Foundation for their immense support and our partnership with the Royal Thimphu College to take in students on a cost-sharing basis.

### LODEN YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP AT A GLANCE

TOTAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDED IN 2020

8

TOTAL SCHOLARS SUPPORTED SINCE 2012

58

TOTAL YOUTH GRADUATED

28

## THE WHITE COAT DREAM

Have you ever idolized a career? Ever since I was a teenager, I would invariably get delighted whenever talks of visiting a hospital were brought up. This was because I would get to catch a glimpse of my superheroes, draped in their white coats. From then on, I dreamt about myself being one of them some day. I was ambitious to accomplish my dream, so I studied arduously. During these hard times of Covid-19, the heroic act of health workers in the front line risking their lives has further bolstered my will to become a brave and a selfless doctor.

Growing up in a family of five was not easy and, my father being the only bread earner of the family made it more difficult. On top of that, being the eldest of the five always kept me on my toes. My sisters would often look up to me and I always had to keep up my A-game. My parents continually motivated me to try my best and never give up. Thus, I was able to top my class frequently. I studied hard but my twelfth grade result was not good enough to secure a full scholarship to study medicine.

I secured APEMS (Assistance for privately enrolled medical students) scholarship but this came with a huge burden for my family as my parents were required to co-fund a huge sum for this scholarship. I was very concerned about burdening my parents for bearing the expenses which were far beyond their capacity as they had to also look after my younger sisters. My father and I had dreamt this big dream together and couldn't bear to watch it shatter in front of our eyes.

But I was extremely fortunate to get financial assistance from the Loden Foundation. It is because of joint support from Loden and the Royal Government of Bhutan's generosity that I can pursue my dream without having to fret about financing. I promise to study hard and come back to Bhutan as a doctor.

Kinley Wangmo  
MBBS Student  
Kelaniya University, Sri Lanka



Kinley with seven other scholars of 2020.

### HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT?

We allocate Nu. 200,000/- each year to cover the scholarship cost for one year. It usually takes about 3-4 years to complete a general undergraduate degree and 5-6 years to complete a medical degree.

Get in touch with us at [lodenfoundation@loden.org](mailto:lodenfoundation@loden.org)





## BHUTAN DIALOGUES

Bhutan Dialogues was conceived as a joint initiative between the United Nations in Bhutan and Loden Foundation. It is a space for critical and civil conversations with thought leaders and change-makers drawing upon their expertise, achievements and inspiration. It aims to invigorate development thinking and refine our ideas and the pursuit of human progress. A forum for right speech and mindful listening, it is an attempt to put into practice the priceless ancient Bhutanese advice that ‘the deliberation of three average brains is better than the idea of a lone best brain.’

In 2020, most Bhutan Dialogues sessions were live-streamed without a physical audience due to Covid-19. Live-streaming our conversations made them more accessible to a diverse viewership. Interaction with the audience also got better with many comments and questions from participants joining us from afar.

Our range of speakers also became diverse when we hosted a special edition of Bhutan Dialogues at the Royal Thimphu College, with three youth panelists to talk about the future they want. Moving ahead in 2021, we aim to host most of our sessions at educational institutions across the country in order to increase youth participation.

### BHUTAN DIALOGUES AT A GLANCE

TOTAL CONVERSATIONS LED AS OF DECEMBER 2020

33

TOTAL CONVERSATIONS LIVE-STREAMED IN 2020

8

## CONVERSATION THEMES COVERED SO FAR

As of December 2020, we had the honor and privilege of inviting a total of 24 Bhutanese speakers and 9 international speakers out of which 18 were male and 17 were female.

We covered the following thematic areas:

- MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA
- GOOD GOVERNANCE
- ECONOMY
- POVERTY
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- EDUCATION
- CULTURE
- YOUTH
- MENTAL HEALTH
- CIVIL SOCIETY
- CIVIL SERVICE
- WELLBEING
- VALUES AND EQUALITY
- LAW
- FINANCE
- ARCHAEOLOGY
- COVID-19
- TECHNOLOGY
- WASTE MANAGEMENT
- PRIVATE SECTOR
- HUMAN CAPITAL

Visit our online platforms to have access to our video recordings and podcasts of all our previous sessions from online presence.



[www.loden.org](http://www.loden.org)



@bhutandialogues



[bhutan.dialogues@gmail.com](mailto:bhutan.dialogues@gmail.com)



Media Partner

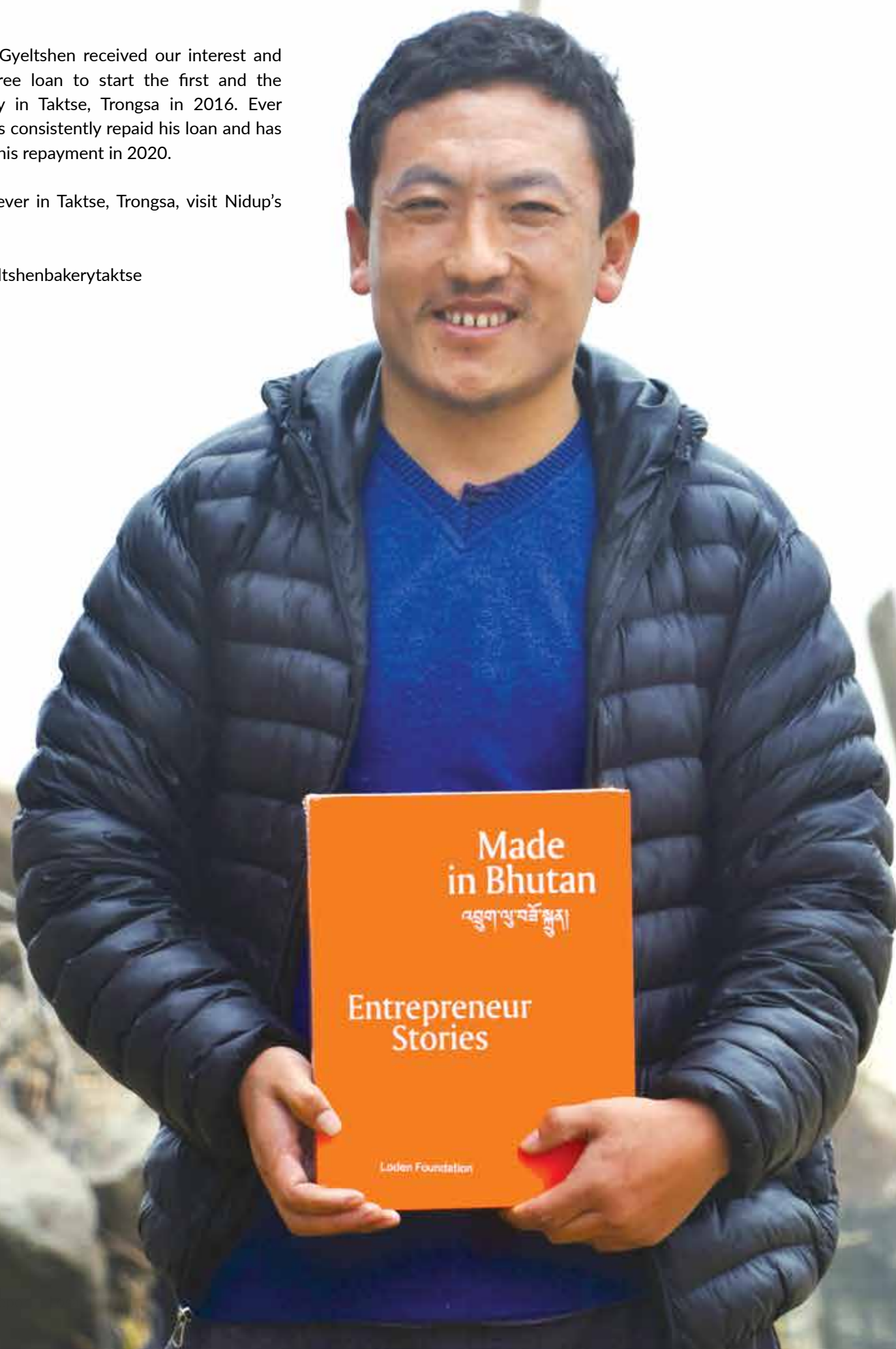
We are grateful to United Nation's Resident Coordinators office and all our guest speakers for their support and partnership. We welcome Kuzoo FM as our new media partner.



Mr. Nidup Gyeltshen received our interest and collateral free loan to start the first and the only bakery in Taktse, Trongsa in 2016. Ever since he has consistently repaid his loan and has completed his repayment in 2020.

If you are ever in Taktse, Trongsa, visit Nidup's bakery.

 @gyeltshenbakerytaktse



## LODEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME (LEP)

# 205

entrepreneurs supported  
across Bhutan

# 72

business are lead by  
women entrepreneurs

# 5000+

aspiring entrepreneurs  
trained since 2008

# 18

dzongkhags covered  
in Bhutan





## LODEN SEED

The Loden SEED (Student Empowerment through Entrepreneurship Development) is an extension of the Loden Entrepreneurship Programme to schools, colleges, Technical Training Institutes and youth centers. We believe that we can plant the seed of innovative thinking and entrepreneurial enthusiasm in the minds of young people by equipping them with basic business knowledge and skills. This early exposure to entrepreneurship ensures that students consider entrepreneurship as a viable career option upon graduation.

In 2019, we trained 1,665 young people in 17 institutions and 4 Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centers and funded 16 student-led on campus businesses. Based on such success, we planned to conduct 27 training sessions in 2020 and introduce Loden SEED in selected high schools in the country. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the training as the educational institutions remained mostly closed to contain the spread of Covid-19.

However, keeping in mind that over 11,000 Bhutanese returned from overseas and 30,000 employees were laid off in the country, we recognized the need for job creation and pushed forward with our entrepreneurship training in partnership with UNICEF Bhutan and the Department of Youth and Sports, under the Ministry of Education. We condensed our efforts into conducting four trainings at Youth Friendly Integrated Service Centers in Gelephu, Phuentsholing and Thimphu, given their unique capacity to attract out-of-school youth.

We also joined the Ministry of Health to reach out to drayang bar girls, LGBT community, and clandestine sex workers to help them avail entrepreneurial business opportunities.

## LODEN SEED AT A GLANCE

TOTAL OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH TRAINED THROUGH 4 TRAININGS HELD IN 2020

101

TOTAL YOUTH-LED BUSINESS IDEAS SUPPORTED FROM 33 PITCHED

3

TOTAL DZONGKHAGS COVERED BY THE TRAINING

3



Chado Namgyel (left) during Loden SEED training in October, 2020



## LODEN-UNICEF BHUTAN WINDOW

### 1. GOKAB Community Centre for Learning

Gokab was founded by a group of young enthusiasts from different dance crews and backgrounds, sharing the same passion for dancing. Our main goal is to represent Bhutan on the world stage through dance. We hope to establish ourselves as a good example for passionate dance enthusiasts and create opportunities for future aspirants. Gokab intends to be a social enterprise in which dance is the key element for sustainable and positive contribution to society through healthy engagement of the youth. We have Mrs. Sonam Wangmo Dukpa Jhalani, the patron of Gokab as the main advisor who has been with us since the beginning and we remain grateful for her unwavering support and love.

Gokab organizes one of the biggest live dance events. It also provides foundational dance classes to all age groups and even has dance fitness classes for adults. Apart from that, Gokab also uses dance to actively create awareness on social issues such as substance abuse, alcoholism, and gender inclusion, while also volunteering in community work such as waste management.

Our advice to all the individuals out there who are passionate about anything in life is give 100% of yourself. Sometimes things don't go according to plan, some days will be hard and hectic, but nothing you do will ever go to waste if you put your heart and soul into it. So, persevere and work hard, be focused, be hopeful and have faith.

Chado Namgyel  
GOKAB Community Center for Learning  
Thimphu



## LODEN-UNICEF BHUTAN WINDOW

### 2. Whole Wheat from Khaling

After completing my undergraduate degree in Political Science and Sociology from Sherubtse College. I was in my hometown of Khaling when I found out that there is a shortage of wheat flour not only in my community but in most of the eastern Dzongkhags. The harsh reality was that there is no manufacturing house in the east which produces wheat flour and this pain in the society gave me an opportunity to venture into this business. Whole Wheat from Khaling is a business located in Trashigang, established to produce Kapchi (wheat flour) with a vision to provide quality wheat flour to consumers by going organic and becoming self-reliant. Whole Wheat from Khaling produces the best quality wheat flour which can be used for both religious purposes as well as for consumption. The business aims to ease the regional imbalance pertaining to demand and supply of wheat flour and create employment opportunities which can help in reducing the rate of unemployment in our country.

Lastly, for me the word entrepreneur is all about choice. As an entrepreneur, you write your own future and I would like to say “every problem is a gift, if you are optimistic about it”. Starting your own business can be exciting and it can become a rewarding experience.

Tenzin Eden Dorji  
Whole Wheat from Khaling  
Trashigang



Tenzin during Loden SEED training in August, 2020



Pema during Loden SEED training in October, 2020.

### 3. Mechanized Home Décor Service

While I was looking for work, I came up with the idea of setting up a business based on paintworks and home décor. I initially took up the work as a means of self-employment but slowly found opportunities in giving employment and in some way, serving my community and nation. Our services started with just wall paintings but we gradually introduced polishing, plastering and paint renovations of buildings. Services similar to mine have existed for a long time but have usually been done using expatriate labours only. We use modern technologies for our services and employ Bhutanese as far as possible. I faced a lot of challenges when I first started and the dream of purchasing professional equipment seemed out of reach until I got selected as a recipient of Loden’s funding in 2020. Now I am eagerly looking forward to bringing a dynamic mechanized service solution in our community with more professionalism.

Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing.

Pemba Tshering  
Mechanized Home Décor Service  
Thimphu

**We are grateful to UNICEF Bhutan and the Youth Center Division at the Department of Youth and Sports under Ministry of Education, European Union (EU) through the HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bhutan, Society Switzerland Bhutan (SSB), AON Groups- Singapore for the partnership and support for Loden SEED in 2020.**

Three aspiring youth entrepreneurs received support through Loden-UNICEF Bhutan funding window since 2019.



## ENTREPRENEURS SUPPORTED IN 2020

○ Loden-UNDP Bhutan Covid-19 Response Fund I and II

○ Loden-UNDP Bhutan Climate Change Funding Window

○ LEP General Funding Window



Dargay  
Druk Kharay



Eupel Dakini Dorji  
Bhutan Yoedden Farm



Kamana Gurung  
PK Organic Farming



Kinley Mo  
Kinleymo Horticulture



Karma Yonten  
Greener Way



Namkhar Degyal Gyaltshen  
Rigpah



Ngawang Tenzin  
The Eco-Villa Garden



Sangay Needup  
Vegetables on Wheels



Karma Wangdi  
APAZA Organic Farm



Ugyen Dorji  
Druk Waste Management



Deepika Neopanay  
Green Product Manufacturing Unit



Penjor Dorji  
Green Pigment Arts



Jangchuk Dorji  
Jangchuk Reishi Mushroom Farm



Pema Chopel  
Mom's Bakery and Cafe



Tandin Dorji  
eLaYog

## ENTREPRENEURS SUPPORTED IN 2020

○ Loden-Unicef Bhutan Funding Window

○ Loden-Society Switzerland Bhutan Funding Window

○ Loden-Hazelnut Programme Funding Window



Chimi Lhadon  
MIE-Lha Bakery



Sangay Lhamo  
Onion and Tomatoes



Loday Wangmo  
Zangden's Flower



Karma Choden  
BookCafe and Bakery



Chokey Wangmo  
CoffeeCat Café



Tandin Wangmo  
Druk Gift Basket Shop



Tenzin Eden Dorji  
Whole Wheat from Khaling



Pemba Tshering  
Mechanized Home Decor



Chado Namgyel  
Gokab



Srijana Giri  
Daisys Advertisement and Marketing Network (DAMN)



Tenzin Chogay  
Craftio Bhutan



Rohan Ghalley  
Druk Eco-Adventure



Sangay Dorji  
Traditional Sword Manufacture



Sonam Dorji  
Eco-Sense Renovation and Construction



Sangay Dorji  
The Rural Agriculture Labour Service





Sangay Needup with Honorable Lyonpo Yeshey Penjor, Dashi Thrompoen Kinlay Dorji and UNDP Resident Representative Aum Azusa Kubota during the launch of 'Vegetable on Wheels.'



Tandin Wangmo with her first batch of Made in Bhutan gift baskets

## LODEN-UNDP BHUTAN COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND I AND II

The Covid-19 pandemic heavily impacted Bhutan's economy - with tourism fully stalled and borders remaining closed, economic activity was limited. Realizing that local entrepreneurship was needed more than ever, we pooled our financial and human resources with UNDP Bhutan to support entrepreneurs. In March, we invited proposals from the existing and aspiring entrepreneurs to address challenges caused or worsened by Covid-19. In order to ensure that our intervention was not only impactful but also efficient and timely, we fast-tracked our selection process and used technology to complete it within a month. We supported 10 businesses through the Loden-UNDP Covid-19 Response Fund I through a combination of grants and interest and collateral-free loans.

Then, to support more entrepreneurs, we called for business proposals a second time in the fall through the Loden-UNDP Bhutan Covid-19 Response Fund II. Loden and UNDP Bhutan partnered with YDF and RENEW to provide end-to-end support to vulnerable people who were most affected by the pandemic. The funding window was open only to the participants of training led by YDF and RENEW. Five businesses were selected to be funded through a combination of grants and interest and collateral-free loans.

### 1. Vegetables on Wheels (VoW)

Vegetable on Wheels under an existing business called the Bhutan Smart Shop is based on the simple concept of delivering vegetables to customers' doorsteps, thereby reducing public gathering and to ensure consistent food supply during lockdown. I was invited from the private sector to serve as one of the members of the National Vegetable Management Task Force (NVMTF) initiated by the Agriculture Ministry. I was involved in marketing the produce sent to Thimphu by sourcing teams from all over Bhutan. The VoW initiative was made possible by the Loden-UNDP Covid-19 Response Fund I as our existing vehicles were already engaged in sourcing and online deliveries. During the first lockdown, we were the only business that supplied vegetables and fruits to the entire population of Thimphu. It was a great opportunity to serve the people during such a critical situation. VoW could provide services to more than 1,000 customers in a day. It was unexpected as per our logistics but was made possible due to our team's efficiency and the experience we gained in vegetable delivery. Our service helped in creating social distancing by delivering essentials to the customers' door step. During the second lockdown, we were the only firm supplying local vegetables to all zones in Thimphu. The products are supplied to our firm through members of Agro-Logistics and Marketing Cooperative (ALMC) based in all 20 Dzongkhags.

The waste vegetables which were not good for sale were given to the Animal Rescue Centre as animal feed. We also supplied free vegetables to kidney patients through Bhutan Kidney Foundation and monasteries. During lockdown, our team supplied free vegetables and groceries to 25 households that could not afford essential items. VoW is honored to be one of the 10 beneficiaries of the first Loden-UNDP Bhutan Covid-19 Response Fund I.

Sangay Needup  
Vegetables on Wheels  
Thimphu

### 2. Druk Gift Basket Shop

I have always had an interest in doing business. In the past, I ran a grocery store and then a restaurant before I moved to Thimphu where I opened a small restaurant again. My dreams of becoming an entrepreneur were fulfilled when I was selected to receive funding from Loden-UNDP Bhutan Covid-19 Response Fund II.

My Business, Druk Gift Basket Shop focuses on making gourmet gift baskets using ingredients such as grocery items, clothing, Bhutanese handicraft items and other products made in Bhutan. In addition to having several flagship baskets, we will also offer the option of a custom basket for which the customer can handpick the ingredients. We cater to individuals as well as corporations. While goodies are displayed in the shop, hot coffee will also be available. Druk Gift Basket Shop would be full of "fun" potential - customers get to buy lots of cute, clever gift items, which will be arranged in an attractive container, creating a charming presentation. We offer job opportunities to women since women can learn and weave baskets faster. Moreover, we are environmentally friendly as it helps to convert plastic and paper waste into gift bags.

Building a business that stemmed from my passion has helped me in many ways. Paving a path in a new niche and following my passion allows me to confidently explain what I do - it helps me during times when I feel stuck. Life as an entrepreneur has its highs and lows but we can always tune into our passion to help us with our branding, storytelling and everything else that represents us and our business. I would like to take this opportunity to thank RENEW Bhutan for giving me and many other vulnerable women the opportunity to get trained and Loden and UNDP Bhutan for funding my business idea.

Tandin Wangmo  
Druk Gift Basket Shop  
Thimphu

**We are grateful to UNDP Bhutan for their partnership and support.**

A total of 10 businesses were supported through Loden-UNDP Bhutan Covid-19 Response Fund I in April, which created 56 jobs and a total of five entrepreneurs were supported through Loden-UNDP Bhutan Covid-19 Response Fund II in partnership with Bhutan YDF and RENEW.



## LODEN-UNDP BHUTAN CLIMATE CHANGE WINDOW

The Loden Foundation and UNDP Bhutan combined resources to support Bhutanese entrepreneurs in addressing issues related to climate change through the Loden-UNDP Bhutan Climate Change Funding Window. Through this funding window, the Loden Foundation and UNDP Bhutan together supported a total of three businesses. All three businesses are based on manufacturing eco-friendly products such as reusable cloth diapers, paint made from natural pigments and biodegradable plates and cups made from waste Areca leaves.

### Green Product Manufacturing Unit

I always wanted to be an entrepreneur and have tried my best to start a business. The Green Products Manufacturing Unit is my dream and always wanted to expand it. My project initially started as Bioplate Gelephu and has been in operation since 2012. The company was started with the aim to manufacture an eco-friendly, disposable, biodegradable plates by using the fallen Areca nut (Doma) sheaths. We have changed the name to Green Product Manufacturing Unit (GPMU), which is a biodegradable plates, bowls and cups manufacturing plant in a new location. It has been upgraded to its current capacity owing to funding support from Loden and UNDP Bhutan.



Deepika's reusable and Eco-friendly bio plates

GPMU takes pride in being completely dedicated to its environment friendly and sustainability values. Our business is based on the concept of “wealth from waste”. We purchase Areca nut sheaths from rural households across Sarpang Dzongkhag thus, providing them with an additional source of income or employment opportunities. Most of our suppliers are women. The fallen leaves from these areca trees have not been utilized at the moment and are completely wasted by the community. Our products are ideal biodegradable substitute for plastic and thermocol disposable plates and cups which are commonly used in the country at the moment (each kg of thermocol creates 6 kgs of Co2 emission).

The hard and waterproof areca nut leaf accumulates water creating a perfect breeding center for parasites like mosquitoes which can cause malaria and dengue, a huge health problem in the southern Dzongkhags (Districts). Burning the leaves is also hazardous to the environment. This industry provides solutions for controlling the spread of diseases due to parasitic mosquitoes. It is a direct support to the Vector Borne Disease Control Program.

GPMU continues to create direct employment for Bhutanese, skilled and unskilled workers in the production and management sectors. It will also create other indirect employment in the area of sales, marketing and transportation, etc.

Deepika Neopanay  
Green Product Manufacturing Unit  
Sarpang



## LODEN- SSB WINDOW

In partnership with Society Switzerland-Bhutan (SSB), we invited business proposals from aspiring and existing entrepreneurs to provide solutions to challenges caused or worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic in Bhutan. We supported five businesses through the Loden-SSB Funding Window in 2020. We thank the dedicated members of SSB for supporting entrepreneurship development in Bhutan.

### Daisys Advertisement and Marketing Network (DAMN)

I have always been interested in art, music and community building. However, I had to study Business Administration with IT. After my graduation, I was determined to pursue a career

in a creative field so I started training myself under Mr. Chand Bhattarai to learn the basics of art, design and animation. Shortly after, I got hired by a popular radio station investing in branding and marketing. With my background of business studies and the training in design, it was easy for me to understand the creative and business aspect of digital marketing & branding.

By 2020, I had changed jobs and had a good position in a reputed design firm. However, when the pandemic hit in March 2020, I quit my job. I had many content creators in my network approaching me to help them get an assignment. While I tried my best to help most of them, I realized that there were so many who were unable to find clients. Interestingly, because of the pandemic, there were many business owners who approached me to help them with their social media marketing and content creation.

To fill this gap between content creators and businesses trying to go online, Daisy's Advertisement and Marketing Network (DAMN) was born. Following freelance model which complements the newly found Gig Economy in Bhutan and the fact most work is online, DAMN offers a variety of services including: branding and digital marketing strategy to businesses and individuals; Training creative crew on business ethics and proposal writing; blogging services – for travel websites; Specialty services (image/profile boosting for individual clients); Entertainment services (shows/events); Social media management and consulting services, and any other social media marketing related services.

As of now, DAMN has connected 4 content creators to 4 businesses, 3 abroad via international freelancing websites and 1 in Bhutan. Additionally, DAMN is in contract with 6 male & 3 female freelancers for future projects.

Srijana Giri  
Daisy's Advertisement and Marketing Network (DAMN)  
Thimphu

**We are grateful to SSB (Society Switzerland Bhutan) for their partnership and support. A total of six businesses were supported through Loden-SSB funding in 2019 and in 2020. Thank you European Friendship Association for donating towards Covid-19 Response Fund.**





Sangay Dorji is the first beneficiary of Loden-Hazelnut Programme



Tandin Dorji is the founder of eLaYog

## LODEN-HAZELNUT PROGRAMME

The Loden Foundation and Mountain Hazelnut Venture (MHV) aimed to support small businesses along the hazelnut supply chain and generate employment opportunities in Bhutan through interest and collateral free loans. One business venture was supported through the Loden-Hazelnut Programme Funding Window. Loden Foundation and Mountain Hazelnuts will jointly provide support and mentorship.

### The Rural Agriculture Labor Service

Mountains, rivers, trees are a big part of Bhutan's story, and agriculture is in the heart of this. As Bhutanese, taking care of our environment is in our DNA. However, over the years, we have deviated a bit from our roots, because of the influence of the outside world, internet technology and rural to urban migration. People are leaving their beautiful, ancestral homes and heading to the city, to pursue dreams such as money and cars but our real big dream lies in our roots. We young Bhutanese fail to see this.

I believe in realizing the big dream which is also the need of the hour. I intend to take this vision forward through my passion project named Drongsep Sonam Laymi Zhabto (Rural Agriculture Labor Service). I was born and raised in Talo, Punakha. Even after getting a degree in hotel management and working as a cable operator for many years, my heart was in my roots, my soil, my land. I finally saw a window of opportunity, and decided to follow my dream. Even as I was dabbling with other things, I did not stop growing and producing fruits and vegetables, experimenting with greenhouse and also encouraging children of Talo, to keep the environment clean and healthy.

Through the Rural Agriculture Labor Service, we will make land ready for production, grow different items by hiring people from the community. Growing trees at the sites is one of the big aspirations of the company. It will help absent landowners to retain their land, and pass down their legacy to their children, help youth find employment, and maintain community vitality. If this venture is successful, we can help reduce the number of imported products. My passion includes a simple, peaceful, healthy future for every Bhutanese citizen and a forever green Bhutan.

Sangay Dorji  
The Rural Agriculture Labour Service  
Punakha

## LODEN GENERAL WINDOW

The Loden Entrepreneurship Programme (LEP) offers interest and collateral free loans that are repayable over three years after an initial repayment holiday of up to 3 months to a year. The term of repayment will be linked to the nature of the business. Most types of business will be considered for support, whether in service, farming or manufacturing sectors, provided they comply with Buddhist principles, respect the environment, create jobs, substitute import and promote export.

We announce calls for business proposals at least twice a year, in the spring and fall. During this time, aspiring Bhutanese entrepreneurs are invited to submit business proposals and other necessary documents, which are reviewed and shortlisted by a panel of judges comprising of Bhutanese and international business experts. The final shortlisted applicants are then called for a final round of interviews.

### eLaYog

I am an entrepreneur currently running a financial consulting firm called Druk Infinity Consulting, my first venture and an online web portal for recruitment called e-LaYog. My second venture was established with funding support from Loden Foundation and the Department of Cottage and Small Industries. e-LaYog currently has three corporate clients who have recruited through our portal. In the long run, my goal is to build a thriving tech company thereby contributing to the digital revolution and transformation in our country, creating meaningful jobs and earning foreign currency for our country. I have five, young and enthusiastic friends in my team.

e-LaYog is a web application capable of accepting job applications on behalf of employers, vetting, sorting and finally shortlisting the application digitally. e-LaYog is able to completely digitize and automate this process reducing average time spent on recruitment for one position from one whole week to just a click of a button. Thus, this will save a huge amount of time and human resource spent on this menial job of data punching and make HR available for more analytical and critical works. Jobseekers also need not spend time and money visiting places to apply for jobs.

On the aggregate level, this translates to savings of about one million sheets of paper for job applications every year and 13 years of full-time work on receiving applications, punching data and shortlisting applicants. While being perfectly in sync with the current Covid-19 pandemic, this platform also supports our country's initiative of going digital.

e-LaYog was started with the dual vision to automate and digitize the recruitment process and to learn and gain firsthand experience of developing and deploying technology solution in pursuit of the long-term goal of creating a vibrant tech company.

So far, in our six months of existence, despite the challenge and slowdown in the economy, we were able to partner with three corporations in recruitment of 41 personnel in various positions ranging from driver to engineers to IT officers. In doing so, we processed over 2,300 job applications via our portal. This translates to a saving of about 23,000 pages of paper and 575 hours or three and half months of full time work for an HR personnel.

As a fairly young and new entrepreneur myself, my advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to start small if you have an idea. And if you don't, look around and see all the problems. Solving them is our responsibility and potentially, our next entrepreneurial venture.

Tandin Dorji  
eLaYog  
Thimphu



## LODEN MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME



I have been mentoring new entrepreneurs in my capacity as an entrepreneur and as the President of the Bhutan Association of Entrepreneurs (BAEyul).

Knowingly or unknowingly we all have mentors in our life. I've learned that one of the most helpful strategies for developing as an entrepreneur is to learn directly from a mentor. Entrepreneurs that are new to the game will often have a lot of questions and the internet won't always have the answer. Mentors not only answer questions but they can help provide insight and helpful tips.

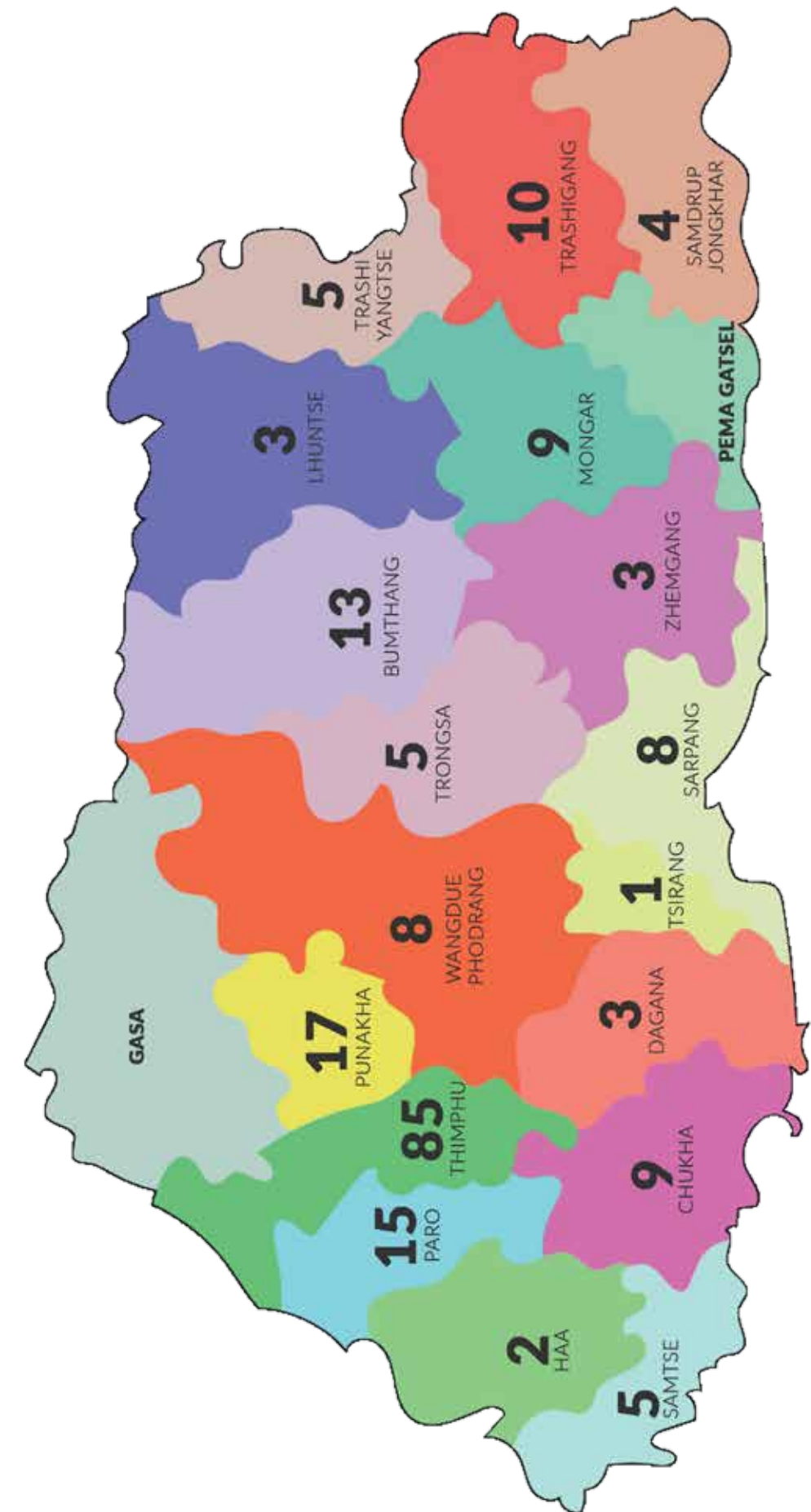
Over the years I have mentored or guided more than a hundred youth. Some have picked up well and some are yet to discover their potential. As a mentor I learnt that when solving problems - not just with my mentee - but at every level of one's life, one should be supportive, encouraging, reflective and should reinforce for successful completion of the solution identified. Once solved, the results should be celebrated thereafter.

BAEyul has been an ecosystem partner with Loden since our inception. The entrepreneur-led association has collaborated with Loden on many programmes such as the entrepreneur flagship initiative, Druk Tshongrig Gatoen, since 2019. One of the most important missions of BAEyul is to bridge the gap between the entrepreneurs and the agencies supporting entrepreneurship development in the country. We at BAEyul believe that we have the potential to contribute to the resilience of the economy at many levels. And one of the main objectives is to support entrepreneurs and startups to promote sustainable businesses. These are what we offer to the young aspiring entrepreneurs through capacity building, collaborations and mentorship. With more than 250 seasoned entrepreneurs in the association, we have the potential to bring about change through innovations and collaborations. I along with some senior entrepreneurs have been assisting Loden in judging and selecting viable business proposals from thousands of aspiring youths.

On behalf of the entrepreneurs across the country I would like to thank the Loden Foundation for the support. We wish to continue the collaboration in building an enabling entrepreneurial ecosystem

Rikesh Gurung  
Founder and Managing Director of The Green Road  
President of Bhutan Association of Entrepreneurs (BAEyul)

### 205 entrepreneurs supported across Bhutan





## LODEN CULTURAL PROGRAMME

56

cultural projects initiated  
since 2013

Over  
4 million

pages of text digitized

Over  
3,260

hours of audio-visual  
content recorded

5

cultural sites projected  
across Bhutan







## LODEN CULTURAL PROGRAMME

Our cultural programme has put us at the forefront of the documentation and study of Bhutan's cultural heritage. The programme currently has three components: written heritage, oral traditions and arts and architecture. Loden's cultural programme has thus taken a two-pronged approach: preservation and promotion.

Preservation efforts began in 2013 when Shejun, now merged with Loden, embarked on an ambitious project to conduct a nationwide cultural documentation programme. Since then, we have recorded 3,257 hours of living cultural items, 120,000 raw pictures out of which 36,000 are catalogued with metadata and brief descriptions. About 7,000 place names are collected out of which 4,914 include metadata. Over 1,000 cultural subjects are identified and described, and some 250 have been written.

### LODEN CULTURAL PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

TOTAL CULTURAL PROJECTS INITIATED IN 2020

4

TOTAL VOLUMES OF KANJUR DIGITIZED IN 2020

110

TOTAL MUSEUMS DOCUMENTED

4

## LODEN ICHCAP PARTNERSHIP

As a result of our efforts to further preserve and promote Bhutan's culture and tradition, we are now building the Loden culture website. With substantial documentation of Bhutan's cultural heritage, a culture website, which will act as a medium of promotion and dissemination, is under development with funding support from the Intangible Cultural Heritage Centre in the Asia-Pacific (ICHCAP). The website will make our resources easily accessible for students, learners, researchers, and the general public.

This means that a student in Thimphu can listen to a village elder in Eastern Bhutan tell a century-old folk tale. Musicians seeking inspiration can listen to seasoned singers perform folk songs that cannot be found anywhere else online. International scholars studying Buddhist heritage will be able to access digitized texts that would otherwise have to be read at their physical locations.

We are nearing the completion of the ambitious project that we embarked on in 2013. With the completion of our cultural website, Loden will be able to offer a rich repository of Bhutan's intangible cultural heritage and unreachable traditions can be reached at the click of a button and dying traditions will be immortalized.

With funding support from ICHCAP, we are also processing thousands of hours of footage we have into documentary films for easier public consumption. This adds a continued value to our past and present work as it forms a vital part of our post-documentation activities. It enables us to develop and enhance the raw footage and data we have collected into a refined production.

**We are grateful to ICHCAP for their partnership and support.**





## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION THROUGH CULTURAL PRESERVATION

In spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, our lake revival project in Zhemgang has successfully been completed. The project, which is funded by the Small Grants Program (SGP) under UNDP, leverages cultural and scientific knowledge for environmental conservation. The Tangsibi Lake was found to be in a bad shape, with weeds growing in the lake and unsustainable agricultural practices being carried out in the surrounding areas. The community sought support from Loden to document its historical significance and advice on how to ensure the revival of the lake and sustain it.

The Tangsibi Lake Revival Project was launched to conserve the Tangsibi Lake and its ecosystem through spiritual, cultural and scientific interventions and practices. According to local legends, it is said that Tangsibi Laki is the jewel basket of the famous Buli Lake, located in the neighboring village of Buli. Besides its cultural significance, Tali Lake is a source of irrigation water for 25 households in the community. The lake also serves as a source of drinking water for wildlife and domestic animals.

As part of the project, we completed extensive mapping and demarcation of the lake area, developed a footpath and eco-cultural trail, conducted a biodiversity assessment of the area, and most recently cleaned the lake.

*“We are happy as the lake looks very clean. Now we will be blessed after clearing the lake and hosting several religious prayers to the lake spirit. We hope and believe that the lake spirit will also take full charge to protect the lake so that water body at the lake will retain forever”*

Sangay Dorji  
Village Elder

**We are grateful to the Small Grants Programme of UNDP’s Global Environment Facility, UNDP Bhutan, the Royal Government of Bhutan, Zhemgang Forest Division, the Department of Forest and Park Services, MoAF, Zhemgang Dzongkhag Administration, the Local Government and the community for their support.**



## LOCAL PARTNERS



## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE PARTNERS



## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS



## INSTITUTIONAL DONORS IN 2020

AKO Foundation	ICHCAP
Association SER	Karuna Shechen
Bhutan Foundation	Montier Trust
Fondation de France	Mountain Hazelnut Venture
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bhutan	Society Switzerland-Bhutan (SSB)
	Tam O Shanter Trust

UNDP Bhutan  
UNICEF Bhutan  
United Nations in Bhutan  
University of Vienna

## INDIVIDUAL DONORS IN 2020

Drury, Eric	Riam, Sarah-Knapp	Wong, Sherin
Lumley, Joanna Lamond	Sutherland, Bruce and Kate	Yann Valery and Audrey
Ne Tan, Ming	Sutton, Andrew	Yanney, Diane
Reed, John	Tacon, William	
Rienfenberg, Hans and Annie	Walker, Jeffrey	

## BHUTANESE DONORS IN 2020

Ambrosia Bhutan Travel	Jigme Zangmo	Sangay Rinchen
Birkha Subba	Kabta Chhetari	Sangay Tshering
Chencho Gyeltshen	Karma Choden Dorji	Sangay Wangmo
Chimi Dema Phuntsho	Karma Gyeltshen	Sonam Om
D.B Tamang	Kinga Dema	Sonam Tshering
Dawa	Kinley Nidup	Sonam Zangmo
Dechen Tshomo	Kinley Pem	Tirtha Raj Puri
Dema Yangzom	Man Badhur Rai	Tshering Edey
Dorji Chenzom	Nima Dem	Tshewang Lhamo
Dorji Dema	Passang Dorji	Yamuna Karki
Dorji Tashi	Pelden Lhamo	Yangchen Choden Rinzin
Druksell	Pem Thinley	Yeshey Choden
Gagan Mongar	Pema Tshering	
Jigme Dorji	Pema Yangzom	



# AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT 2019 & 2020

# FUND STATEMENT 2020

## LODEN FOUNDATION RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

RECEIPTS	SCHE	Amount (Nu.)	PAYMENTS	SCHE	Amount (Nu.)
<b>Opening Balance:</b>			<b>Expenses:</b>		
Cash in Hand		335.36	a. Administrative Expenses	2	11,940,111.54
Cash at Bank		35,710,425.47	b. Program Expenses	3	4,635,716.00
Dollar Account		1,690,170.42	c. Outstanding Advances & Prepaid	5	363,276.85
			d. Asset purchased		20,982,574.99
<b>Fund Received during the Year:</b>	1		e. Endowment Fund		20,000,000.00
a. Endowment Fund		5,000,000.00	f. Accounts payable		20,000.00
b. Advance Received		1,067,079.94			
c. Accounts Payable Received		1,033,800.16	<b>Closing Balance:</b>		
d. Interest Earned		2,383,537.54	Cash in Hand		-
e. Donation & Contribution		23,505,682.38	Cash at Bank		12,763,385.97
f. Loan Repayment(net)	4	2,004,204.50	Dollar Account		1,690,170.42
<b>Total</b>		<b>72,395,235.77</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>72,395,235.77</b>

  
(Tshering Edey)  
Finance Manager



  
(Phuntsho Namgay)  
Executive Director

  
(Tenzin Jamtshok)  
Auditor



## LODEN FOUNDATION RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

RECEIPTS	SCHE	Amount (Nu.)	PAYMENTS	SCHE	Amount (Nu.)
<b>Opening Balance:</b>			<b>Expenses:</b>		
Cash at Bank		12,763,385.97	a. Administrative Expenses	2	12,764,695.92
Dollar Account		1,690,170.42	b. Program Expenses	3	3,733,678.11
			c. Other Expenses:		
<b>Fund Received during the Year:</b>	1		1. Loan Disbursed	4	1,812,691.14
a. Endowment Fund		10,000,000.00	2. Outstanding Advances & Prepaid		482,148.79
b. Advance Received		434,313.22	3. Asset Purchased	5	135,545.00
c. Interest Earned		3,400,065.94	4. DHI loan		7,000,000.00
d. Donation & Contribution		30,071,941.61	5. Accounts payable		780,013.58
			<b>Closing Balance:</b>		
			Cash in Hand		
			Cash at Bank		29,960,934.20
			Dollar Account		1,690,170.42
<b>Total</b>		<b>58,359,877.16</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>58,359,877.16</b>

  
(Tshering Edey)  
Finance Manager



  
(Phuntsho Namgay)  
Executive Director

  
(Tenzin Jamtshok)  
Auditor



Receipt	NU	USD
Institutional Contributions	25,156,779	339,956
Individual Contributions	2,049,500	27,696
Interest	3,285,351	44,397
Other Revenue	2,856,777	38,605
<b>Loan Repayment</b>	<b>12,266,436</b>	<b>165,763</b>
<b>Total Receipt</b>	<b>45,614,843</b>	<b>450,654</b>

Payment	NU	USD
Loden Education Programme	5,518,148	74,570
Loden Entrepreneurship Programme	6,920,355	93,518
Loden Cultural Programme	1,940,498	26,223
Office Expenses	2,112,030	28,541
<b>Loan Disbursed</b>	<b>7,801,278</b>	<b>105,423</b>
<b>DHI Loan Repayment</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>	<b>94,595</b>
<b>Total Payment</b>	<b>31,292,308</b>	<b>422,869</b>





## OUR TEAM

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Lopen Karma Phuntsho**  
Founder and President

**Pushpa Chhetri**  
Trustee

**Sangay Tshering**  
Trustee

**Lyonpo Om Pradhan**  
Trustee

**Cheda**  
Trustee

**Dr. Francoise Pommaret**  
Trustee

**Sangay Zam**  
Trustee

**Gerard Tardy**  
Trustee

### MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Phuntsho Namgay**  
Executive Director

**Tshering Edey**  
Finance Manager

**Namgay Lhendup Wangchuk**  
Finance Officer

**Penchela**  
Programme Officer (Education)

**Lhakpa**  
Programme Officer  
(Entrepreneurship)

**Tshering Wangmo**  
Assistant Programme Officer

**Yeshe Wangchuk**  
Programme Officer (Culture)

**Tendel Zangpo**  
Publication Officer

**Ugyen Tenzin Thinley**  
Assistant Communications Officer

**Yeshey Peyden**  
Legal and Credit Officer

**Khandu**  
Administrative Officer

### LODEN EARLY LEARNING CENTRE FACILITATORS

Pema Lhadon  
Ura, Bumthang

Rinzin Tshomo  
Ura, Bumthang

Hema Limbu  
Norbugang, Samtse

Manju Subba  
Norbugang, Samtse

Karma Deki  
Lingmethang, Mongar

Tendrel Zangmo  
Lingmethang, Mongar

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Email: info@bhutanfound.org





## WAY FORWARD

Looking back at 2020, we realize that it is a year we must not forget. Many would look back and see it as a year of public health and economic crises. Yet, when we look back we must see it as a time when we were faced with what seemed to be an insurmountable challenge and, even so, overcame it. In health, with the leadership of His Majesty the King and the government's efforts, Bhutan came out virtually unscathed.

At Loden, we endeavoured to supplement the tireless efforts of the leaders. We joined the campaign to educate the population on social distancing and proper hygiene, prioritized the training of more health personnel and supported 8 young men and women to pursue their studies in medicine, so that Bhutan would be better prepared for challenges in health. When education institutions were closed across the country to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we realized that students' learning at home would be very limited and that the country was in need of virtual lessons. Our team partnered with the Volunteer Teachers of Bhutan (VTOB) and helped record 25 Dzongkha, History, Science and Economics lessons which were broadcasted on national television to ensure learning continued at home.

But most notably, we supported local businesses to address challenges caused or worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. Through multiple funding windows, we supported 30 entrepreneurs. Towards the end of the year, we introduced the Loden Emergency Fund, with funding support from Karuna-Shechen and Bhutanese entrepreneurs. The Emergency Fund was created to ensure that good businesses do not shut down or face extreme difficulties due to challenges caused or worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is true that the events that followed the outbreak of the Corona Virus cannot be described as anything other than a crisis. But a crisis offers a rare opportunity to pause, rethink and reset. Everyone's work came to a halt this year and we used this time to rethink our strategies, and reset our priorities. We move ahead into 2021 more motivated and resilient than ever.

It has been a truly remarkable year, and we sincerely thank all our partners, donors, stalwarts, and supporters for their unwavering support in carrying out all the activities that we outlined in this report.

ཐོས་པས་ཚོས་རྣམས་ཤེས་པར་འགྱུར། ཐོས་པས་སྡིག་པ་ལྡོག་པར་འགྱུར། །  
ཐོས་པས་དོན་མེད་སྤྲོང་བར་འགྱུར། ཐོས་པས་བྱ་ངན་འདས་པ་ཐོབ། །

Learning makes one know the facts  
Learning keeps one away from evil Learning helps one eschew  
the worthless Learning helps one transcend suffering.

-The Bodhisattva Basket





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