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The Loden Report

The Bi-annual Newsletter

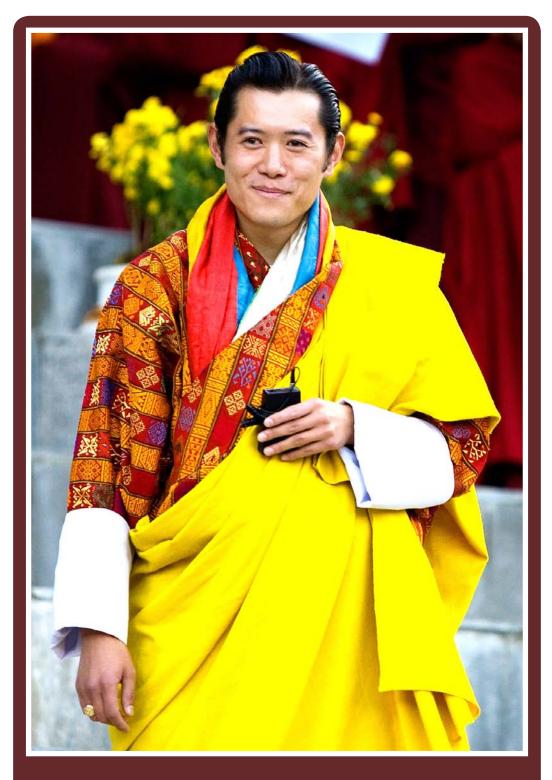






Summer 2017

www.loden.org



"The wealth of our country is our human resources. Our future will invariably be shaped by the talent and skills, disposition for hard work, commitment, and dedicated service of our young generations"

 His Majesty's Address to the 12th Convocation of the Royal University of Bhutan - 7 June 2017



ABOUT US

Established in 2000, Loden is managed by a group of Bhutanese citizens with a shared concern and interest, dedicated to fostering an enlightened and happy society through the promotion of education, youth entrepreneurship and Bhutan's culture.

Loden's core areas of operation includes:

- i) Education and learning
- ii) Youth Entrepreneurship
- iii) Bhutan's Culture and Tradition

"Knowledge has no owner; Everyone is entitled to it"

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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Kuzuzangpo La!



It is with immense pleasure that I bring to you the 13th edition of Loden's Newsletter to update you, our supporters, partners, benefactors, and well wishers, far and near, on our achievements in the last six months, from January to June 2017.

Seeing the farmers sow seeds, flowers blooming and bees savour them, and the plants finally bear fruit – all within six months – is an amazing experience of nature's display with different shades of beauty. Loden has followed a similar cycle. We started off by charting out plans for the year followed by mobilisation of resources and then implementing our activities. We are finally beginning to see the amazing results of our work. Several exciting projects have kept the entire team at Loden fully engaged, enjoying the rigour of work all the while.

As the schools opened for the new academic year, Loden sponsored 80 children from economically disadvantaged families in different schools across the country. Loden provided Nu 6,000 to primary school students and Nu 8,000 to high school students which would enable them to buy uniforms, stationery items, and sportgears.

To support deserving candidates to pursue specialised higher studies such as psychology, medicine, and engineering, Loden has offered scholarships to five most promising candidates. Loden hopes to build a pool of medical professionals to provide medical services to the society.

Our three Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres in Mongar, Bumthang, and Samtse have enrolled 88 children this year. In our effort to expand our ECCD services, Loden has opened two centres in Goshing in Zhemgang District and Dawakha in Paro District with financial support from UNICEF. We hope that our modest initiative will help materialise our government's objective of providing ECCD facilities to all 205 gewogs of Bhutan. Loden wishes to establish two more ECCD centres in the near future.

It has been exactly 10 years since the inception of Loden entrepreneurship programme launched in 2007. It is aimed at curbing rural to urban migration, rising youth unemployment, and fostering a vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem in the country. Including the new cohort of 12 most energetic entrepreneurs, Loden has so far supported 133 ventures in 18 districts of Bhutan and has trained more than 3,000 entrepreneurs. The three-year Loden-DHI funding, which has supported 30 projects, has come to an end. Each project, on average, employs five people. Loden wishes to take this moment to thank Druk Holding and Investments (DHI) for bestowing trust and confidence on us. We wish to continue our collaboration with DHI to support more start-ups in the near future.

Societal needs and priorities keep changing. Our youth might not have been receptive to the idea of self-employment. Not anymore. Recognising the appetite for entrepreneurship skills, Loden organised a two-day entrepreneurship crash course in Trashigang which attracted 95 aspiring entrepreneurs. Similarly, as part of our post-loan service, Loden has trained 32 mentors and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with 19 mentors who offered to help budding entrepreneurs.

Loden added to our 18 years of maturity as a civil society organisation a crucial cultural element. Just as they bring many opportunities, the fast pace of globalisation and technological advancement pose unique threats to the preservation of our cultural identity. Favourably, Shejun Agency for Bhutan's Cultural Documentation and Research has merged with Loden, adding another honourable responsibility to Loden's mandate – preservation and promotion of the Bhutanese traditional values and cultural identity. Loden Foundation will now have an active programme of cultural preservation and promotion, which was one of the founding objectives.

In the hope of expanding our services to the wider sections of the Bhutanese society through education and social entrepreneurship, Loden has submitted a grant proposal to SAARC Development Fund. In the meanwhile, several programmes will keep our hands full in the next six months.

On this note, I would like to thank you for your sustained support. I hope you will continue to stay on board with us as we continue to widen the horizons of our social services across Bhutan. Please visit our website www.loden.org and Facebook page www. facebook.com/lodenfoundation to learn more about us.

Thank you and Tashi Delek!

Dorji Tashi Executive Director



Empowering Rural Children through Early Childhood Development

Over the years, early childhood care and development has gained importance across the world. A number of studies have confirmed that a lot of physical and psychosocial development takes place in a child's life up to the age of six.

Recognising the importance of nurturing children in this age range, Loden endeavours to provide the Bhutanese children with the right intervention which will have a lasting impact on enhancing their social, emotional and academic developments.

Loden started the Early Child Care and Development (ECCD) programme in 2008 when we established three

centres in remote locations to provide free and equal opportunities to children from rural areas. Recently, Loden established two new ECCD centres, one each in Dawakha, Paro, and Goshing in Zhemgang in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and with the financial support from UNICEF.

The Early Learning Centre in Dawakha was inaugurated by the Minister for Education, Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk. The community members, including the parents of

Two new ECCD Centres established
Total of 57 children enrolled in the two Centres



the 41 children enrolled in the centre, attended the inaugural ceremony.

The ECCD centre in Goshing is the first such centre to be established in the locality where children will now have free access to early education facilities. The centre has 16 students and two facilitators employed by the government.

Between 2008 and the end of 2016, more than 500 children have graduated successfully from Loden's ECCD centres. Loden looks forward to more collaboration in the near future with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education to help reach early child care development services to all corners of Bhutan so that no child is left behind.







Loden Early Learning Certre Goshing : Zhemgang www.loden.org

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Bridging the Past and Present

Bhutan is going through a rapid transition. Economically, it has moved from subsistence farming to a capitalist consumerist economy. Socially, Bhutan was fifty years ago an entirely rural community but most people now live in new urban settlements. Their beliefs, values, knowledge and skills were mostly passed down orally some decades ago but today the population has moved from an oral past to an audio-visual present with most people engrossed in social media platforms. Politically, Bhutan was a medieval monarchy until a few years ago when it adopted multiparty democracy. In its cultural ethos, Bhutan has moved from a nature-oriented spiritual worldview to a secular, scientific and materialistic thinking.

Such transition inevitably comes with enormous societal tension and stress. The two processes of modernization and globalisation have caused a cultural shift which, if not handled properly, can cause serious social ruptures. As we actively pursue socio-economic progress through education and entrepreneurship, it is important for us to reflect on Bhutan's own heritage and strength, and to seek a meaningful development without losing the core principles and cultural values. It is pertinent to harness the power of Bhutan's past to mitigate the effects of change and external influences, and to leverage Bhutan's cultural heritage for sustainable development.

In order to rise responsibly with the two wings of tradition and modernity, past and present, and bring about socio-economic development with cultural sensitivity, Loden has activated its programme of preserving and promoting Bhutan's cultures and traditions. This, it did, through merger with Shejun Agency for Bhutan's Cultural Documentation and Research, a non-profit agency which was founded and run by Dr Karma Phuntsho. The nine research associates and programme officers of Shejun joined Loden in April 2017 marking a new chapter for Loden. Shejun has in the past 17 years of its existence digitised 2 million pages of books in over 40 archival collections in Bhutan in order to both preserve the books in digital copies and to make them accessible to scholars and readers. It has also created over 3000 hours of video recordings, over 100,000 photos of Bhutan's cultural heritage, and published many books and essays on Bhutan's cultures.

The merger between Loden and Shejun has significantly increased the management team of Loden and also have enhanced its professional capacity as the new members bring expertise in research, audio-visual documentation, IT and field work. Through the merger, Loden has finally managed to implement one of its initial objectives of preserving and promoting Bhutan's cultures and traditions, and Shejun has found a formal CSO existence within Loden so as to carry on its work into the long future. Through our knowledge and expertise of the past and farsighted view of the future, we hope to be more effective in carrying out our present activities and programmes to bring greater and lasting impact.

Meet Loden's New Board Members

As we continue to grow and provide our social services to the wider sections of the Bhutanese society, we are pleased to introduce to you our three new trustees who joined Loden's Board. All three of them bring with the unique experience and expertise that are instrumental in furthering the works of this organization.

Dr. Francoise Pommaret

Francoise Pommaret, PhD, is a cultural anthropologist, Director of Research at the CNRS (National Centre for Scientific Research, France) and Associate Professor at the College of Language and Culture (ILCS), Royal University of Bhutan.

She has been associated with Bhutan in different capacities since 1981 and has published numerous scholarly articles and books on different aspects of Bhutanese culture. She is currently involved in the documentation of the Bhutan cultural atlas www.bhutanculturalatlas.org and is working on the interface between deities, local powers and migrations in Bhutan.

In 2015, she was honored with the highest French award La Legion d'Honneur for her lifelong contribution to the relations between Bhutan and France.

Mr. Karma Tshering

Mr. Karma Tshering was the Chief Executive Officer of Business Opportunity & Information Centre, an autonomous agency of the Royal Government of Bhutan, dedicated to empowering entrepreneurs by providing access to business finance and support services till May 2016. He also served as Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Bank of Bhutan Limited heading Credit, Banking and Corporate Operations and Group Executive Director of Lhaki Group of Companies.

In the civil service spanning almost 12 years, he served as Project Development Officer, Registrar of Companies and Chief Industries Officer in the Ministry of Economic

Affairs (erstwhile Ministry of Trade & Industry). He was a member of the Enabling Environment Committee of the People's Project in 2006. He also served on numerous boards of government owned, public and private companies as board director (and independent director) notably on Bhutan Development Bank Ltd, BCCL, State Trading Corporation of Bhutan and member of the Economic Stimulus Plan Task Force of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

He brings in immense work experience in entrepreneurship development, project development and financing, monitoring and evaluation of projects, banking & finance and corporate governance both at formulation and implementation levels. He currently serves on the board (second term) of Druk Air Corporation Ltd.

Ms. Ugyen Choden

Ugen Choden served as the first Programme Director of the Bhutan Foundation, responsible for its introduction and establishment in Bhutan. For over eight years, she fundraised for and oversaw the Foundation's programmes that include innovative conservation of wildlife and the environment; equitable and sustainable development focusing on - special education, emergency medical services and rural livelihoods; promotion of good governance by capacity building to enhance democracy; and preservation of culture through restoration of historic sites.

Prior to the Foundation, she worked as a national consultant for over ten years for national and international organizations with a focus on social issues such as primary education, HIV/AIDS, and gender studies. She attended the University of Delhi in India, Sherubtse College in Bhutan, the National Institute of Fashion Technology in New Delhi and briefly the University of Arkansas in the United States.

They will now be part of the crucial team responsible for providing overall guidance and strategic directions to this organization. The serving Board of Trustees and Management Secretariat extend their cordial welcome to the three most dynamic new board members.









Maiyesh Kumar Tamang One of the few ceramic entrepreneurs in Bhutan

Young Ceramic Artist Breathes Life into Dying Art of Pottery

The art of pottery, which largely involved making of earthen pots traditionally in Bhutan, is slowly disappearing with some concluding that it is on the verge of extinction. A young Bhutanese ceramic artist is attempting to breathe a new life into the dying art of pottery.

Twenty nine-year-old Maiyesh Kumar Tamang, owns a Clay Studio in Thimphu. He describes his works as contemporary pottery.

Maiyesh dreamt of becoming a painter but ended up being a ceramic artist. How did this happen? It was a love at first sight. While in India where he went to study painting, Maiyesh once went with a friend from Nagaland to visit his teacher. There, they were served tea in cups made out of clay. Even the tea pot was made out of clay.

"It turned out that he made pots and the cups himself and I thought maybe I could give a shot at it," said Maiyesh. Since then, there has been no looking back. He discarded his plans to become a painter and went on to obtain a degree in ceramics from Visva-Bharati University.

Today, at his Clay Studio, Maiyesh makes ceramic products ranging from cups to tea pots, bowls, vases

and many more. Maiyesh says he mostly works on small pieces. He had made almost a thousand cups so far.

His works including beautiful vases resting on the shelves in his studio looks striking to many eyes. But for Maiyesh himself, they are not up to the mark.

"I was not really happy with the final products. People liked them but being a ceramic artist, I know exactly what good work is and what bad work is. People wanted to buy my products but I felt guilty since my work was not so good."

There is also the challenge of competition. "We always have to compete with products imported from India and China," said Maiyesh. It was the use of white clay that changed the game for Maiyesh.

"After I started working with white clay, SABAH supported me. They wanted to buy my products. That was a very good platform. I sold almost 25,000 from one kiln."

Apart from pursing his passion for pottery, Maiyesh also teaches the art of ceramics to young aspiring potters, an effort that could go a long way in keeping the age old art of pottery alive. Currently, there are 12 students taking pottery classes at Maiyesh's Clay Studio.

-Source: Bhutan Boardcasting Service

Planting the Entrepreneurial Seeds in Youth

Loden has been conducting entrepreneurship crash courses in different parts of the country every year to inculcate a sense of entrepreneurship in the youth. The youth in Bhutan are receptive to the idea of exploring the job market for opportunities and expanding their knowledge.

This year, the crash course was conducted in Trashigang on 27 and 28 of April. The course was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources, Regional Office in Trashigang. Ninety-five aspiring entrepreneurs from a wide range of academic backgrounds attended the course that introduced them to the basic concepts of entrepreneurship, business management skills and marketing fundamentals.

It was heartening to see that the participants were enthusiastic, passionate, and receptive to the training. They looked forward to starting new business ventures if they were provided with the necessary support and investment from the financial institutes and relevant government agencies.

The training will be followed by a call for business proposals from Loden later in the year during the autumn LEP competition where 10-15 aspiring entrepreneurs will be selected for funding support.





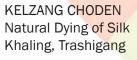


YANGKI Confectionery & Bakery Kanglung, Trashigang

TSHERING PENJOR AND GROUP Tailoring and Barber shop Thinleygang, Punakha

LEKI DAWA

Toner Cartridge Recycling Motithang, Thimphu SONAM JAMTSHO Natural Enterprise Bgey, Haa



KINGA YEZER Green Stove Fabrication Khaling, Trashigang

TSHERING Incense Powder Manufacturing Phangyuel, Wangdue

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Providing the Much-needed Kick-start to Business Ventures

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The Loden-DHI fund is a special funding window launched in 2015 by Loden Foundation and Druk Holding & Investments (DHI). The fund seeks to address challenges pertaining to access to finance and to empower the youth through the promotion of entrepreneurship in Bhutan.

> DHI has provided Nu 20 million over three years to be managed by and channelled through Loden Foundation. This year, Loden has received the third tranche of the fund of Nu 6

million, which has been provided as collateral- and interest-free loans to a new cohort of 12 ventures with an excellent diversity and geographic spread.

Over three years, with the support from DHI, Loden has been able to expand the LEP programme by providing funds to aspiring entrepreneurs and a variety of projects that would help bring about social changes and benefits to the community.

Loden hopes to be part of similar collaborations in the future.

SONAM CHOKI Flower Nursery Changtagang, Thimphu

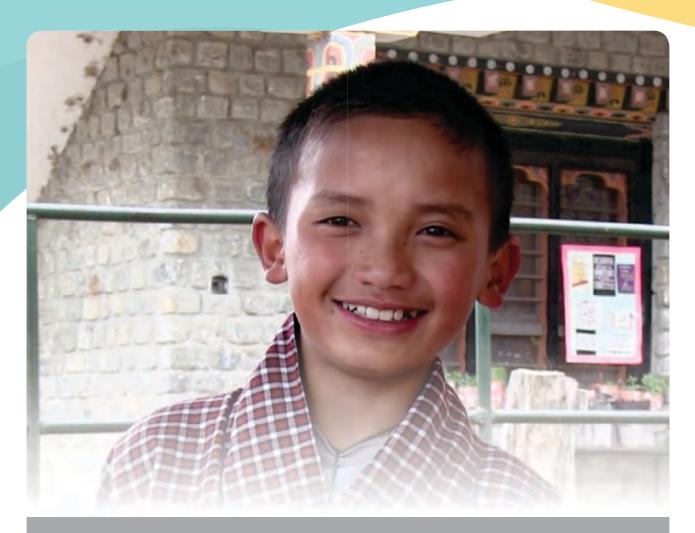
DHAN KUMAR SHYANGDEN Eco Waste Solution Punakha and Wangdue

JANGCHUBLA Traditional Boot Manufacturing Chubacha, Thimphu

Sonam Wangchuk Honey Cultivation Chhokho, Bumthang KINLEY PELDEN Chocolate Manufacturing Thimphu

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Making Education Possible for the Disadvantaged Children

Sitting on a bench, Sonam Dorji fidgets as he waits, alongside his mother, for the Loden's staff to film him for a short clip on the International Happiness Day.

To make him feel at ease, we ask him what happiness means to him. His reply is instant and spontaneous: 'I am happy when my mother is happy. My mother is happy when my sister and I go to school and study.'

His mother looks at him fondly and smiles.

Although short, Sonam's response to the question on happiness is stirring and deeply evocative. It is stories like this that motivate Loden to work harder in our mission to support the education of children from disadvantaged family backgrounds.

Sonam Dorji studies in Class VI and lives with his

single mother and sister. Sonam and his sister are among 108 children whose education Loden has been able to support with the support of our donors. Sonam's mother is a very hardworking woman who single-handedly brings up her two children following the death of her husband. She takes up various clerical jobs to make ends meet. (To watch the full video on the International Day of Happiness, please visit the Loden youtube channel).

There are many other deserving children like Sonam and his sister whose lives could be changed for the better with the support from you.

Loden provides an annual support of Nu 6,000 (\$100) to primary students and Nu 8,000 (\$150) to high school students for their basic necessities such as school uniform, shoes and stationery items.

If you wish to make a difference in the life of a child and are interested in sponsoring his or her education, please write to us at info@loden.org.



Keeping the Light of Knowledge Shining

Every year, thousands of students graduating from high schools hope to pursue higher education of their choice. However, owing to limited scholarship opportunities and stiff competition, many deserving students are left behind.

To support deserving students with good grades from the economically disadvantaged background, Loden provides full and partial scholarships to high school graduates to study both within and outside the country. The applicants are encouraged to take up courses that will help address the shortage of professionals in specialised professions in the country such as doctors, engineers and psychologists. This year, five deserving students from different academic backgrounds have been awarded the Loden scholarship for higher education. They will pursue MBBS, BBA and BA Psychology within as well as outside the country.

Loden is heartened to support a student to study psychology this year at a time when mental health problems among the youth and suicide cases are rising in the country.

We hope to be able to continue to support education that will not only boost the economic growth of the country but also enhance the social well-being of the people.

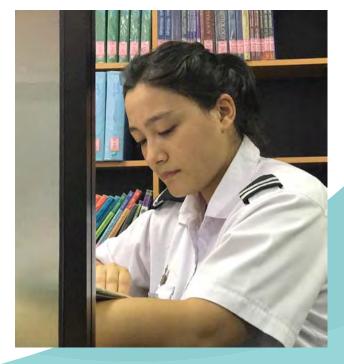
Working Hard to be a Doctor

Loden Foundation is truly a saving grace for many people. It believes in empowering people and giving them a second chance to fulfil their dreams.

I was selected as a Loden Scholar in 2015. With the generous support from Loden, I was able to turn my dream into reality and enrol at the Kotelawala Defence University in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I am committed to my field of study. I consider myself very lucky to be able to pursue such a prestigious degree.

I hope to continue to work hard throughout my educational journey here so that I will be able to serve the people of Bhutan as a doctor in the near future.

- Arpana Pradhan, 2nd Year MBBS student





To Keep the Bhutanese Palate Burning

Chillies are part of every Bhutanese family's diet and it is eaten in various forms, with all kinds of dishes. Statistics with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests show that the Bhutanese people consume over 2,000 metric tonnes of chillies in a year.

However, the chillies produced by the local farmers are not enough to meet the demand in the market. Besides, the production of chillies is low during the winter season.

Last year, Bhutan faced a chilli crisis of a sort when the government banned the import of chillies from India.

Recognising the demand for locally grown chillies all year round, Kinley Dhendup, an aspiring entrepreneur, decided to produce off-season chillies which would be made available in the market.

With the financial assistance of Nu 1 million from Loden at the end of 2016, Kinley and his team started chilli farming in Punakha. They grow chillies in nine locally made green houses spread over an area of about two acres.

Three months after he started the green farm, Kinley was able to sell the first batch of chillies in the market which fetched him a good income.

Thuensum Green Farm, as Kinley's farm is called, is an exemplary case of an enterprising mind investing in a business that would only grow with the growing demand for chillies in the market.



Kinley Dorji The first off season chilli grower



A Bit of Hand-holding Doesn't Hurt

People often contribute their time and money to religious activities in the hope of accumulating spiritual merit but rarely do they come forward to help business start-ups.

Presently, there is no organisation in Bhutan other than Loden Foundation that consistently invests in mentoring start-ups besides providing them collateral- and interest-free capital fund. Loden Foundation has trained more than 50 local mentors among which few are active.

Like any other relationship, it takes effort from both sides to make mentoring work. Entrepreneurs or mentees must think about this process as something that requires investment on their part, in nurturing the relationship and listening and trusting, without being defensive. A mentor can take the time to personally give guidance, advice, and make an emotional investment in the mentee's personal development. But sometimes, the mentee expects much more from the mentor such as injecting equity, doing business itself and writing a business plan. This is beyond what the mentor can do.

Mentees should understand that their mentors are not their consultants and their output cannot be measured directly. A consultant may be able to offer some things that a mentor cannot but it comes at a price that runs into several thousand ngultrums or dollars. The Loden mentors are readily available free of charge. Over time, they can be better than consultants. Mentees have nothing to lose by having a good mentor and the risk is non-existent.

We need to understand that business mentoring is a practical approach for the wholesome development of entrepreneurs as they start and grow their business. The process gives mentors an extraordinary opportunity to facilitate their mentees' personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge and experience. It also gives the mentor an excellent platform to enhance mentoring and leadership skills besides creating a legacy that has a lasting impact on the mentee.

Mentoring can be a truly rewarding experience. Therefore, as part of nation building, people with skills and knowledge should come forward to donate their time and expertise. We should nurture our startups through their challenges, ensure their personal and overall development, and support their efforts to contribute to our economy.

Contributed by Pema Wangchuk Director, CDCL (Pro-bono Chief Mentor for Loden Foundation)



Bhutan participates in GSEA (Global Student Entrepreneur Award)

This year, Dhan Kumar Tamang, the founder of Eco Waste Solution, represented Bhutan in the GSEA held in Frankfurt, Germany, from 27-28 April. Fifty-five students from all over the world participated in the event. Bhutan participated in GSEA for the first time in 2016.

Every year, a few selected student entrepreneurs from all over the world are given the opportunity to participate in the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards and compete with one another. The GSEA is a global competition for students who own and operate a business while attending college or an institute.

Dhan Kumar Tamang's waste management company is an innovative social organisation that focuses on providing an integrated approach to waste management service with zero waste strategy. Started in 2015, it is the first waste management company in Wangdue Phodrang. It currently provides services in two major districts in Bhutan, Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang.

Dhan Kumar is a student of Gaeddu College of Business Studies pursuing Master's Degree in Business Administration. He is the winner of Bhutan's Best Student Entrepreneurship Award 2016, which was awarded to him at the closing ceremony of the Global Entrepreneurship Week 2016, an event hosted by Loden.

Happiness is a Cup of Herbal Tea

Anyone who visits Bhutan, even for a short while, will know how important a cup of tea is for the Bhutanese people. Tea time, especially during holidays and in the evenings, is quality family time. Thick butter tea is served and enjoyed.

Times have changed and people have become conscious of their unhealthy lifestyle. Herbal tea is a healthier alternative that office-goers and health-conscious people are opting for.

Observing this trend, to capitalise on it, aspiring entrepreneurs Wangchuk Kinga and his business partner Rinzin Wangchuk started 'Bhutan Herbal Tea Farm' in Bumthang last year with support from Loden Foundation.

Bhutan Herbal Farm is spread over an area of 10 acres in Krongmanba in Bumthang. Wangchuk and Rinzin produce four kinds of herbal teas grown organically following integrated soil building practices that protect the soil from erosion, reduce nutrient leaching, help retain and release soil moisture, suppress weeds, and boost organic matter.





Wangchuk Kinga The premier herbal tea producer

The four kinds of flavoured herbal tea they produce are Peppermint Tea, Chamoline Tea, Lemon Verbena Tea and Himalayan Sea Berry Tea. Each tea has a unique flavour, aroma and health benefits.

To be able to produce and maintain an optimum level of nourishment, medicinal value and wholesome taste, the herbal teas are hand cultivated, dried for an appropriate period of time, and packaged without the use of chemicals.

The herbal teas are already out in the market and are sold at Nu 250 for a box containing 20 sachets. It is currently sold from outlets in and around Bumthang.

The vision of the proprietors is to turn the farm into a destination spot where tourists and locals can visit to experience organic farming, gain knowledge and take back souvenirs. They have plans to incorporate capacity building opportunities for trainees from various organisations to learn more about organic farming.



Management Team



"True teams are made when you put aside individual wants for collective good."

Contribute to Loden by writing a cheque or making an online transfer to:

In Bhutan

The Loden Foundation P.O. Box 131 Thimphu Ac No. 5000045068011 Swift Code: BNBTBTBT

In the US

The Bhutan Foundation Suite 525 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue Washington, DC 20037 USA Ac No. 5308947869 ABA: 031000053 Swift Code: PNCCUS33

In Europe

The Loden Foundation 3 Pembroke Mews London, W8 6ER, UK Ac No. 82553872 Sort Code: 40-16-08 (UK Charity No. 1114763)

You can also make donations by using Paypal through our website www.loden.org

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