

Loden Child Sponsorship and Youth Scholarship Guidelines



PREFACE

Loden started as a child sponsorship programme in 1999 with funding support from friends and colleagues of Lopen Karma Phuntsho - the founder and former president of Loden Foundation. Although school education in Bhutan is state financed, extra expenditures such as expenses for uniform, stationery, sports gear and so on can often be too heavy a burden for low-income families.

Loden Foundation was one of the first organizations to support children at school in Bhutan with the first child sponsorship beneficiary in 1999 - Tenzin Pelmo, one of the seven daughters in a family in rural Bhutan. With our support and guidance, she is now a history teacher, an independent woman and even looks after her younger siblings.

Today, Loden's child sponsorship scheme has funded more than 219 children all across Bhutan and more than 100 children continue to receive support. The children, once enrolled in the scheme, continue to receive the funding support of Nu. 10,000 to Nu. 12,000 each year depending on their grade.

Building on the success of this scheme and the impact it has had on the lives of hundreds of children and their parents, Loden Foundation started the Loden Youth Scholarships in 2012 to support exceptional young Bhutanese from low income families to pursue higher education within and outside Bhutan. Since 2012, Loden has supported about 77 scholarships.

The Loden Foundation Sponsorship Scheme and Youth Scholarship Guidelines is a document containing introductory information about the Loden Sponsorship Scheme and Loden Youth Scholarships and provides guidelines to ensure the most transparent and accountable processes are adopted in implementing the programmes.

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Child Sponsorship Scheme Guidelines

Preamble

Loden Sponsorship Scheme is a flagship programme of the Loden Foundation to ensure that all children have equal access to basic education. The scheme supports financially challenged and underprivileged school going children in Bhutan by providing yearly sponsorships for uniforms, stationeries, sports gear, etc. Although school education in Bhutan is free, there are some costs that have to be borne by the parents. Such costs can be often too heavy a burden. For rural families, whose livelihoods are based on subsistence farming; and other economically challenged families with little to no income. The Loden Child Sponsorship Programme aims to support underprivileged children in achieving their basic right to education

Loden sources donations from individuals and institutions from within and outside Bhutan to support the children with such difficulties.

Terms of Benefit

- I. The Loden Foundation will provide Nu. 10,000 for each child in Class VIII and below and Nu. 12,000 for Class 9 and above until Class 12.
- II. The Loden Foundation supports children in schools from class PP until 12 in mainstream education and children at monastic schools/shedras below 18 years of age.
- III. The amount is standard for all unless a donor wishes to increase the year of donation to a specific child which will be reviewed by the Loden Foundation.
- IV. The number of children to be sponsored each year will be determined by the Loden Education Committee based on the availability of the funds.

Selection Process

A. Applications

- I. Applications shall be generally received at the beginning of the academic year (January to February), but based on the recommendations, the office shall accept applications all year round.
- II. The scheme shall ensure that the children are not beneficiaries of similar existing schemes within Bhutan in order to avoid duplication and give preference to the ones who do not receive any support.
- III. The Child Sponsorship Programme ensures that discrimination is reduced as far as possible by ensuring that all children benefit from sponsorship programmes and that selected beneficiaries fall under two or more criterias
- IV. The selection of the children for sponsorship shall be generally based on recommendations made by focal persons who are trusted by the Loden Foundation such as teachers, local leaders, head of the monastery, entrepreneurs and other friends of Loden and on supporting documents. The Loden Foundation may also support children who directly approach the Foundation.
 - a. Individual donors, foreign or Bhutanese, who wish to channel their funds through the Loden Foundation to their selected beneficiary children are also facilitated by the Loden Foundation on a case-by-case basis.

B. Selection Criteria

The selection of the children shall be done through two approaches:

- I. Information provided in their application documents and the scores by the Education Committee on the overall financial needs of the children or
- II. Consensus of the committee when full documents are not available.

C. Documents Required

- I. Filled out child sponsorship application form Annexure I

- II. Cover letter on behalf of the child from the student themselves, parent, guardian, school teacher or any other trusted volunteer of Loden
- III. Recent photograph
- IV. Most recent final examination/progress report
- V. Family tree (children from families with unresolved census issues are not required to provide a family tree)
- VI. Reference contact number (Class teacher or Principal)

D. Selection Committee

- I. The Selection Committee for the Loden Sponsorship Scheme shall comprise the Executive Director, Finance Manager, Legal Development Officer and Education Programme Officer
- II. The Programme Officer – Education shall be the overall coordinator and responsible to ensure transparency, accountability and due diligence.
- III. The selection of candidates shall be made based on the Loden Sponsorship Criteria and Scoresheet (Annexure I)
- IV. The Selection Committee shall decide the selection without any conflict of interest.
- V. The Education Committee is required to declare conflict of interest if any, pledge to judge the applications objectively
- VI. A minimum of 3 committee members must be present during the selection should all members cannot be present at the time of selection.

Fund Disbursement

- I. On the completion of the selection in February of each year, the Programme Officer – Education will issue a note sheet approved by the Executive Director to the Finance Manager, who shall forward it to the Finance Officer for the disbursement of funds.

- II. The funds shall be deposited in the bank account of the school, parent, family member or guardian provided during the start of the sponsor year after review and verification.
- III. The funds will be deposited to the same account number each year, any change in account detail and/or person in charge of the fund shall be further reviewed and verified by the Education Programme Officer and informed to the Finance Officer accordingly
- IV. All funds after the first installment shall be disbursed upon the submission of the child's yearly examination/progress report and receipts of expenditure.
- V.

Monitoring

- I. The Loden Sponsorship Scheme support starts from the day a child receives the first installment until s/he finishes Class 12 and not beyond 18 years of age if the beneficiary is in monastic education. However, the sponsorship shall be reviewed and may be discontinued in the following cases:
 - a. The change in circumstances of the child such as improvement of economic status of the family, obtainment of support from other sources, discontinuation of education or any other reason which the Education Committee consensually sees as a sufficient reason to stop the support.
 - b. Failing for two consecutive years.
 - c. Children facing disciplinary actions from the schools will be reviewed by the Education Committee for the continuity of the support.
- II. The focal persons managing the sponsorship fund will submit mid-term and annual examination certificates to the Loden Foundation.

- III. Any Loden Foundation staff going on official tours shall, as far as possible, try to meet with the children.
- IV. The Programme Officer – Education, shall closely monitor the progress of the beneficiaries and shall prepare an overall report on the scheme at the end of each year.
- V. All files maintained by the Loden Foundation regarding the child shall be kept confidential.

Contact with Sponsors

- I. All communication between the sponsor and child must go through the Loden Foundation.
- II. If any of the sponsors request to meet the student in person, it will be done so in the presence of Loden staff or/and the guardian of the children.
- III. The Loden Foundation shall follow all measures necessary for the protection and safety of the children with regard to this sponsorship programme.

Loden Education Committee

1. The Loden Education Committee shall be formed with the following members:
 - a. The Executive Director (officiating ED in absence of the ED)
 - b. Programme Officer – Education
 - c. Finance Manager
 - d. Development Officer
 - e. Legal Officer
2. The Loden Education Committee shall:
 - a. Ensure transparency and accountability of the programme
 - b. Discuss and take action on any matter in relation to the programme
 - c. Plan and execute the sponsorship scheme and scholarships
 - d. Terminate sponsorship or scholarship as per the guidelines
 - e. Select sponsorship recipients as and when necessary

Programme Officer – Education

The Programme Officer – Education will serve as the lead staff and point of contact for the Loden Child Sponsorship and Loden Youth Scholarships. S/he will be responsible for activities including but not limited to:

1. Coordinating application and selection
2. Ensuring funds are being disbursed on time
3. Raising funds for programme
4. Maintaining an up-to-date list and profiles of all beneficiaries
5. Calling, coordinating and recording minutes of all education committee meeting
6. Reporting to the donors as required
7. Submitting annual report to management
8. Reporting the updates, plans and budgets for the programme to the Board of Trustees.