



The Loden Report

The Official Newsletter of The Loden Foundation

Dedicated to promoting education and learning in the Himalayas and to raising awareness of the region's culture, religion and environment.

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Winter 2007

Kuzu Zangpo La! Tashi Delek! Jullay! Namaste!

The Trustees of the Foundation are pleased to welcome you to the first issue of The Loden Report. As the Foundation continues to grow, we are finding an increasing need to update our supporters on the activities of Loden, general news on the state of education in the Himalayas, as well as a means to reach out to benefactors for future activities.

Loden remains a small organization, founded on the base principle that education should be accessible to all. We are supported by a core group of benefactors who have largely seen the Foundation from its inception and have publicized it by word of mouth. As a result, we currently rely on a small number of people to fund our activities.

Loden's primary focus is on child sponsorship; in particular, the financial support of individual students in primary and secondary school.

Our priority is to support students whose family's financial positions make it difficult for them to justify attending school at any age. Although the cost of education in the Himalayan regions in Bhutan, Tibet, and Ladakh is largely state sponsored, expenses for simple items like notebooks, pencils, and uniforms, are often too much for families whose livelihoods are based on subsistence farming.

In addition to individual child sponsorship, Loden supports projects that promote education at all levels. One such project is the Loden Ura Day Care Centre which will cater to the needs of around 50 children between the ages of 3 to 6. This Centre will provide free enrolment to eligible children and will be operated by the resident principal of Ura Secondary School under supervision of Loden.

Most recently, the Foun-

dation has launched the Loden Entrepreneurship Programme (LEP). Focused on helping young Bhutanese develop the skills needed to start and run their own businesses, the LEP will offer a free course on business and entrepreneurship led by leading professionals in Bhutan and abroad. This will then be followed by a competition, the winners of which will receive 'soft' loans of various sizes to kick start their business ideas.

None of Loden's activities are achievable without the generous financial assistance of its supporters. Thank you for your continuing support. *Name same kadrinche! (Thank you beyond heaven and earth!)*

Best wishes for a joyous holiday season!

Yeone Moser
London

Loden Ura Day Care Centre

The Loden Ura Day Care Centre will provide a cost free pre-school programme to prepare children between the ages of 3 and 6 for actual schooling.

The Centre will be based in Ura, which is located at an altitude of 3,200 meters above sea level. Ura valley has one of the largest clustered traditional villages in Bhutan and also encompasses three smaller villages. The main Ura village, Makrong, has over 60 households and has an approximate population of 600 people. The three adjacent villages of

Gaden, Pangkhar and Somthrang between them have a similar population. The people are mostly subsistence farmers and cultivate crops such as potatoes, wheat, barley and buckwheat and rear cattle, yak and sheep.

Loden estimates there are around 50 children of eligible age in Ura who are not attending school. The Centre will provide the children of Ura with an early start at learning as well as a safe place for them to play, while also relieving

their parents of having to look after them.

The funding for the initial set up of the Centre, the costs for classroom equipment, and the salaries for the teacher will be provided by The Loden Foundation. The Centre will be run by a teacher currently being trained at a nursery in Thimphu, and will be managed by Loden as well as by the Principal of the Ura secondary school. Thanks to the assistance of Loden supporters, the Centre is expected to open in mid February 2008.

‘ The Programme aspires to help young people realise their dreams by providing them with vocational training, moral and technical support, and initial funds to start new business enterprises. ’

Loden Entrepreneurship Programme

The Loden Entrepreneurship Programme (LEP) is a business education project of Loden Foundation conceived and financially supported by Gerard and Anne Tardy, two of Loden's longest standing benefactors. The aim of the Programme is to train and support young Bhutanese men and women in entrepreneurial business ventures.

The Programme aspires to help young people realise their dreams by providing them with vocational training, moral and technical support, and initial funds to start new business enterprises. By helping young people cultivate entrepreneurial skills, the Programme hopes to alleviate the rising unemployment problem among Bhutan's youth.

Entrepreneurial education is a crucial part of LEP.

The Programme will provide a structured training course on the ways to explore business ideas, assess the market, write business plans, cultivate entrepreneurial ethics, raise funding and manage businesses.

Following the training, there will be a competition for a number of ‘soft’ loans to support a wide range of entrepreneurial ventures. Such ventures may be in cottage industries, such as transformation of local products, restaurants and guest houses, logistics and distribution, educational and environmental activities, and cultural and artistic productions. So long as they are financially viable and can generate sustainable employment, they will be eligible for support.

The business projects will be monitored by the Loden and LEP trustees as well

as by local and international mentors. In particular, Gerard Tardy's leadership of the Programme means that LEP and its Bhutanese candidates will have the benefit of working with and learning from someone with truly extensive experience in international venture finance.

The training course is expected to take place in April 2008, the competition in August, and the funds to be awarded to competition winners in October 2008.

Further details will be posted in the new year on the Loden web site at:

<http://www.loden.org/lep>

‘ The stresses of coping with severe illnesses are challenging enough without having to worry about the financial burden of affording lifesaving emergency medical care. ’

Leki Medical Fund

The Leki Medical Fund is a new fund which was created earlier this year in memory of Leki Tsering, a Bhutanese undergraduate university student who was diagnosed with cancer and died late last year while studying abroad in India.

The eldest of four children, Leki left Bhutan for India so that she could pursue her undergraduate degree. Whilst there, Leki's mother died suddenly leaving Leki, as eldest child, with the weight of responsibility to care for her family.

Only a year later Leki herself was diagnosed with aplastic anemia and fungal pneumonia and needed a bone marrow transplant in order to survive. Coming from a small village in the Himalayas, Leki had limited access to funds and could not afford the costs of the surgery needed to save her life.

The difficulties of raising sufficient funds to pay for Leki's medical treatments

rapidly became apparent and added to the burdens she already carried.

Through contacts at Loden, Leki eventually received funds from private sources abroad and successfully underwent surgery. She seemed to be on the road to recovery when she died suddenly in late 2006.

It is on rare occasion that students from the Himalayas suffer severe or even life-threatening illnesses while studying abroad. However, the sad circumstances around Leki's case highlight the importance of being able to mobilize resources and offer rapid financial assistance to those students from the Himalayas in need of such funds for emergency medical purposes. The stresses of coping with severe illnesses are challenging enough without having to worry about the financial burden of affording lifesaving emergency medical care.

The Leki Medical Fund



will review requests for financial assistance on a case by case basis. Its funds will be available only to full time students from the Himalayan region who are studying outside of their home country when the emergency occurs. It is not intended to necessarily cover the full costs of an operation, nor to cover the costs of ongoing treatments, but is rather intended to act as an emergency bridge to respond quickly in severe or life-threatening situations and until full funding can be obtained from the state or other private sources.

Please offer generous support to Loden in its efforts to build a solid financial base for the Leki Medical Fund.

Notes From Afar...

Dear Friends of Loden,

Season's greetings from Ura. It is the peak of winter here and the temperature outside is very low but the internal incandescence could not be higher with fervent festive spirit and political ardor. Bhutan is going through very exciting times. Yesterday, we observed the annual festival of the day of nine evils. It is one good day to do bad things, so you can imagine the craze. Today, we are celebrating a hundred years of monarchy and commemorating the day when Sir Ugyen Wangchuk was made the first king of Bhutan in 1907. Bhutan's political transformation from a monarchical tradition to a democratic system is also in full swing. With the approaching parliamentary elections at the end of this month and in March, there is a lot of political furore and fear, speculation and gossip.

Loden is also seeing exciting developments. Our scholars have all finished their annual exams for 2007 and are anxiously waiting for their results. The plans for the Loden Day Care Centre in Ura are in good progress and we are also in the middle of hiring a full time co-ordinator, the first salaried employee for Loden (having done everything voluntarily so far). We are also preparing to launch the Loden Entrepreneurship Programme in March 2008 and to register Loden as a civil society organisation in Bhutan.

Thanks to your good wishes and support, I am pleased to inform you that Loden is flourishing and we are continuing to make a big difference to many lives, particularly those of children. Despite all the excitement, we continually think of your kindness and wish you good health, happiness and success.

On behalf of all Loden staff and beneficiaries in Bhutan, A Happy Christmas and New Year to You!

Karma Phuntsho
Ura, 17 December, 2007



Child Sponsorship Opportunities

The Foundation currently supports both primary school students and secondary school students.

Our work in this regard is two-fold — first is to identify students in genuine need of financial assistance and secondly to source funding to adequately support them. Given differing levels of need amongst students, we have

placed caps on the maximum amount of financial support Loden offers to students at the various levels of education — 6,000 ngultrums for primary students and 8,000 ngultrums for secondary school students.

Even with education in the Himalayan regions being largely state financed, the cost of a school uniform or book

supplies can often be too great a burden on rural families whose livelihoods are based on subsistence farming.

The Foundation also offers direct sponsorship opportunities, which are particularly important where a student's needs may fall beyond the bounds of Loden's limitations. This sort of individual sponsorship can be especially

rewarding for both sponsor and child as a special bond is formed between the two and a sponsor can see the direct impact contributions are making on individuals.

Please let the Trustees know if you have interest in sponsoring individual students. in the Himalayas.

Some of the Students Supported by Loden...



**Kesang T., Bhutan
Ura School**

Kesang has lost his father and his mother is a road labourer. After a year out of school due to financial difficulties, Loden was able to send Kesang back to school. Loden, with generous support from Douglas Wilson has supported Kesang's education for the last five years.



**Phurba W., Bhutan
Wangdicholing School**

Phurba's father is epileptic and mother illiterate. He has two siblings and his parents live beside Wangdicholing School where his father works as the watchman. Phurba's education is supported by Susan Bowditch.



**Tenzin P., Bhutan
Ura School**

Tenzin's father is a school cook. Tenzin and her four sisters go to the same school where their father works. Robert Miles, has supported Tenzin's education for the last five years.



**Sabita D., Bhutan
Lungtenphu School**

Sabita is ethnically Nepali Bhutanese and her father works in the National Library. Alan Masson is supporting Sabita's education.

In Need of Support...

Sonam C., Ladakh Hillgrange School, India

Sonam is age 5 and from a small village in the Zaskar region in Ladakh, called Ating. His parents are illiterate and have no means to earn money except through small scale farming. Sonam is the only son and has three sisters.

Around 30 families live in Ating and the village has just one government run primary school. The educational system in that region is very poor and there is little appreciation of the relevance of education.

Sonam's uncle secured a place for him at a top private school in Dehradun, India, but can only afford part of the fees. This school is a three day road journey from Ating, which in the winter months is blocked off by ice and snow.

Loden is able to supply a small portion of the school fees to assist Sonam, but the support of a private sponsor is needed to pay for the remaining cost that would allow Sonam the opportunity to live and study in a reputable school outside of his small village.

Please contact the Trustees immediately if you are able to sponsor Sonam's schooling in 2008.

The Loden Foundation

The Loden Foundation aims primarily to promote education and learning in the Himalayas and secondarily to raise awareness of Himalayan religion, culture and environment beyond the Himalayas. The target region for the Foundation's primary activities is the Himalayan region covering Bhutan, Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, and Tibet, with an initial focus on the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Corporate Sponsor in Ladakh

Loden is proud to be supported by Footprints.

Footprints is a full service travel agency with offices in Leh and New Delhi. They offer package tours as well as individualized adventures, whether in the form of cultural tours, jeep safaris, treks, or river rafting. They specialize in adventures in Ladakh, but also offer

tours and treks in Sikkim, South India, Rajasthan.

As part of its collaboration with Loden, Footprints will contribute 10% of any profits made when Loden Foundation supporters purchase any Footprints adventures, to be used towards Loden activities in Ladakh and elsewhere in the Himalayas.



Footprints Himalaya

Simply address any requests to Lotus Sandhup at Footprints and quote Loden. Visit them at <http://www.footprintsindia.com>

Please contact us at any time if you would like to sponsor a child, learn more about our activities or have suggestions to make about new projects or events.

Email: info@loden.org

Donation Form

I would like to contribute toward:

- General child support programmes
- Specific identified child sponsorship opportunities
- Vocational training programmes
- Day care centre
- Leki Medical Fund
- Any Loden Foundation project

Other:

Method of Payment

- Check
- Bill Me
- Cash

Total: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Signature _____



Please make a special gift this holiday season.

Every gift size helps.