

Support

What distinguishes LEP from current micro-credit schemes is our plan to provide technical and moral *support*. In addition to the *supervision* and support from regular LEP board and the Jury, through the Loden administrator, at least two *mentors*, one international and one local, will be appointed for each entrepreneur. These mentors will give regularly professional and emotional support. We will also monitor the entrepreneurs by asking them to submit brief monthly *reports* and by undertaking a proper *evaluation* of the businesses every six months. Meetings and *workshops* will be conducted to share experiences, to reinforce business spirit and promote solidarity among the LEP community. The most successful candidate may also be offered to the join the Jury and the board.

All people are entrepreneurs but many do not have the opportunity to find that out – Muhammad Yunus

LEP – Investing in social innovation

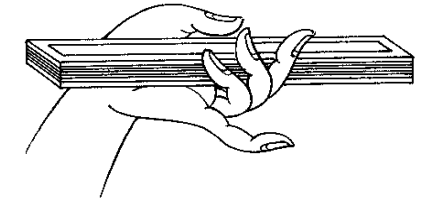


If you are interested to take part in LEP and wish to contribute to its funds or act as a mentor or supporter or simply want to know more about it, please contact:

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Loden Entrepreneurship Programme



The Loden Foundation

LEP is a business education project of the Loden Foundation launched with generous support from Mr Gerard and Mrs Anne Tardy.

The Need

Why LEP? As thousands of educated youth are churned out of schools and colleges each year, Bhutan is facing an unprecedented problem of unemployment. Private sector is still a fledgling and civil service is saturated. With money-oriented economy sweeping across the region, there is also need for a socially responsible and ethical entrepreneurial culture. LEP was launched in order to give a helping hand to hundreds of young people who are searching for guidance and support to be entrepreneurs.

Objective

The aim of LEP is to train and support young Bhutanese in entrepreneurial business ventures. The programme aspires to help them realize their dreams by providing them vocational training, moral and technical support and initial funds to start new entrepreneurial ventures such as cottage industries, transformation of local products, restaurants and guest houses, educational and environmental activities, cultural and artistic productions. By helping young people to be self-starters in business enterprises, the LEP hopes to cultivate entrepreneurial skills, create employment and promote a self-sufficient economy while promoting also social volunteerism by involving successful entrepreneurs and business experts as volunteers. We also aim to build an entrepreneurial knowledge and resource base and a pool of Bhutanese and international experts, who will give voluntary support and guidance to the young entrepreneurs.

Education Programme

Entrepreneurial education is at the heart of the programme. Loden has successfully conducted its first training programme for 45 young participants on 12-13 April in Thimphu. Coming from a wide range of background, all of the participants expressed keen interest to learn more about entrepreneurship and plan to set up their businesses. A group of four business lecturers, a local entrepreneur and one international expert instructed at the programme on entrepreneurial thinking, cultivation of entrepreneurial ethics and skills, conception of business ideas and structures, financial analysis, operations and management, marketing techniques, drafting of business plans, importance of customer relations and other entrepreneurial issues.



While some gave a more academic presentation of theories, applying them to familiar Bhutanese examples, others told a personal story of their background, education and business experience to inspire and encourage the participants. Besides giving their time and knowledge for free, the instructors conducted the training with much enthusiasm and humour sharing their knowledge and experience selflessly.

Response

The training was a great success with 60% of the participants rating course content as excellent, 75% the quality of instruction as very good and 70% organization by Loden as excellent on scale of poor, fair, good, very good and excellent. All the candidates claim their time at the course to have been highly productive. The training has succeeded in arousing a fervent spirit of social entrepreneurship among the participants, instilling a sense of leadership, informing them of the business world and its complexities, and of the various challenges and prospects they face as a potential entrepreneur.

"The Loden Entrepreneurship Training Programme was very helpful. I hope Loden will conduct more such courses in the future."

Sonam



Funds

What next? Loden has now advertised the competition for capital funds which will be made available as soft loans. The applicants have been asked to submit by 30 August a detailed business proposal, an executive summary of it, a statement of interest, one reference and CV. An independent LEP Jury will assess the proposals and shortlist the applicants by the end of September. The Jury shall interview the shortlisted candidates and make the first award of funds in October 2008.

Approximately 5-10 awards will be made each year although the LEP board will determine the exact number of funds after assessing the proposals. LEP will have a budget of £100,000 for first three years, and over £25000 will be available as capital loans each year. The size of the loan can be between Nu.100,000 and Nu. 1 million (approx. £1200 to £12000) and the LEP board shall decide the length of the interest free grace period and the rate of interest thereafter depending on the business proposal. Loans will be available without a collateral but the LEP shall enforce a system or procedure which can ensure proper use of funds and also monitor the progress of the enterprises. For the administration of the loans, LEP hopes to collaborate in the future with an established financial institution in Bhutan in issuing the funds, checking their uses and proceeds and collecting the repayment.