#### Annual Report 2019









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#### **Lhomon Society**

#### The Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative

The Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative (SJI) is a community-based organisation that operates under the auspices of the Lhomon Society; a registered Civil Society Organisation (CSO) in Bhutan. SJIpromotes the principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH) in harmony with Government goals at grassroots level. SJI upholds trust and confidence, valuing and enhancing local potential through partnership with local government and government institutions.

#### **Our Team**



Karma Choki Administration & Accounts Officer



Karma Dema Program Officer



Pema Wangzom Teacher



Ugyen Tshomo Zero Waste Craft Trainer



Ugyen Zangmo Sales & Marketing Supervisor



Cheku Dorji Program Director



Dawa Lead Teacher



Tara Nidi Nepal Teacher



Yeshey Tenzin Program Officer



Tandin Phub Driver/Office Assistant



Sangay Tenzin Teacher

#### VISION

Foster genuine Gross National Happiness-based development and the knowledge, principles, values, and practices required to achieve it in Samdrup Jongkhar, as a model.

#### MISSION

To build prosperous, resilient, ecologically sensitive and self-reliant communities that have the courage, initiative, and wisdom to take their future in their own hands; to achieve food self-sufficiency; to enhance opportunities for local youth, and to create a genuine GNH-based educational system locally.

# FIVE PROGRAM AREAS





SJI promotes organic farming through the preservation of indigenous agricultural practices and its enhancement through training, awareness and providing a technical backstop to the local communities.



#### **Zero Waste**





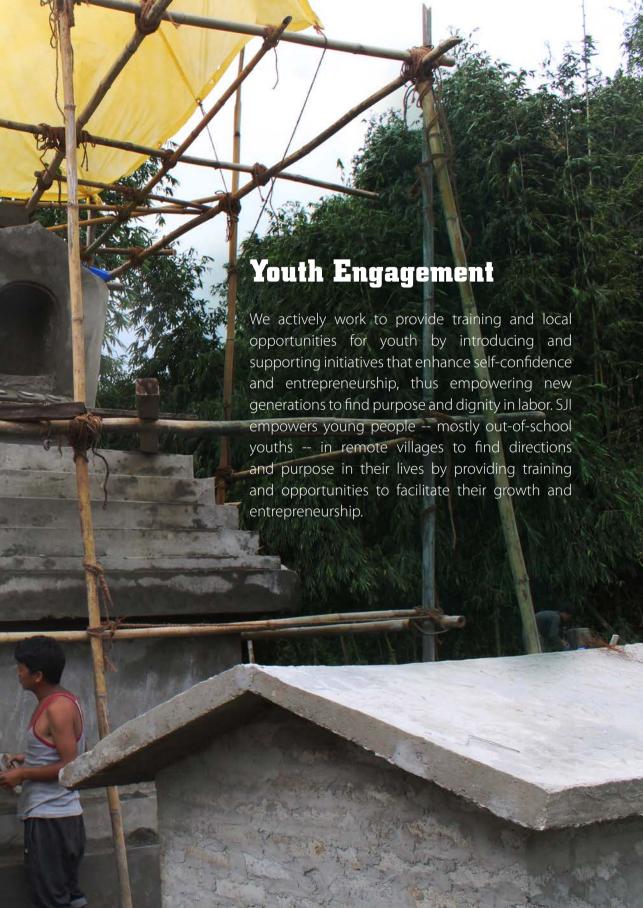




As we aim for a zero-waste society, SJI works towards bringing behavioral change at household levels by educating people on sustainable production, consumption, and waste management.







#### **Organic Farming**

Following the dramatic increase in rice yield in Rikhay village under Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag (District Administration), the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) was introduced at Marangdut community in Zhemgang Dzongkhag.

The SRI was started in 2016 at Rikhay by a single household. The number of households growing rice in Rikhay using the SRI has however been increasing steadily with 11 in 2017 to 25 in 2019. All for one reason, over 60 per cent increase in the rice yield compared to the conventional rice-growing method.

Biogas project was also introduced in Marangdut, which has shown positive results. A group of 17 farmers were also trained on local seed savings, harvesting cow urine for manure, compost making, and biogas construction.

During the 5th Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition in Samdrup Jongkhar, the SJI sensitised people on





zero waste and showcased local environment-friendly products to more than 3,000 people attending the exhibition.

With technical support from the **Environment** Officer, Thimphu Thromde (municipality), the SJI is piloting Takakura composting with 10 households of the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) in Dewathang. Takakura is a composting method named after its founder Dr Koji Takakura. The technique uses a fermentative microorganism to compost organic waste obtained from fermented food such as yeast, curd and sugar. If successful, this approach

is aimed at involving the entire RBA community in composting food waste to prevent it from going to the landfill.

Our initiative to start Community Seed Bank is also helping our traditional cereals like millet, amaranths, maize and rice to return to the fields with farmers agreeing to grow them again. In our attempt to improve collaboration and partnership, MoU has been signed with ARDC - Wengkhar, IFAD-CARLEP Project and Dzongkhag Agriculture Sector for intensification of Lead Farmers, development of model farms and promotion of commercial crops.

#### Seed Keepers' and Growers' Group



In response to a loss of local seeds, Dungsam Community Seed Keepers and Growers Group (DCSKGG) was formed in 2019 with 29 members from Dewathang and Orong Gewogs in Samdrup Jongkhar to conserve and promote the rare and traditional variety of seeds.

Ata Karma from Rekhay village in Dewathang is among 29 members who have been promoting and reviving traditional cereal crops in his community. "Our parents used to grow all nine kinds (also known as *Dru Na Gu*) of cereal in our community but gradually it disappeared in our times," said Karma.

After getting trained from the SJI, Karma has revived little millet and foxtail millet cultivation in an acre of land with the help of Dungsam Community Seed Bank (DCSB). Though it was very challenging initially to revive the cultivation because of birds feeding off the seeds, things have started looking up with crop loss to birds abating over the years. More villagers are now growing millet.

"We have distributed the responsibilities of reviving these crops among the members," said Karma.

Apart from millets Karma has also grown two varieties of lentils with rice and maize. "Initially, I took millet seed from DCSB, but now I have multiplied and distributed in our community," said Karma.

Today Karma and his fellow farmers' products are being marketed by The SJI. Karma has earned around Nu 5,000 through selling foxtail millet besides having a surplus for self-consumption and making offerings.

"Today there are seven households who have revived millet in the Rikhey community alone," added Karma.

### **29**Members

## **10**Cereal Seeds Saved

**7**Chiwogs
Involved





Despite apprehensions and challenges, successful paddy cultivation using the SRI method at Marangdut village under Zhemgang Dzongkhag has been inspirational to the community members.

They reported that the SRI proved effective in minimising vulnerability to pest and disease. They also said that the requirement for seed was 60 per cent lesser than the conventional method while it also didn't require as much water as in the conventional method.

The farmers also reported a significant improvement in the yield. Following this, 13 members of the community have decided to adopt the SRI method in the coming season with four other people from Marangdut. To further enhance the rice production the SJI will facilitate high-yield rice variety for the community.

Meanwhile, our rice-growing project in Phelumen village under Orong Gewog in Samdrup Jongkhar enabled the 24



households to produce over 5.32 metric tons of rice. Our initiative has enabled Pheluma villagers to cultivate more than 7.85 acres of paddy fields. A few years ago only two households used to cultivate rice in the village.

Back in Rikhay village, the first village to try the SRI rice technique, the number of households growing rice using the method has increased to 26 from 11 in the previous years. Another 10 farmers have also partially started using the SRI method. With a feat of success and improved yield, we are hoping that the entire Rikhay village would turn to the SRI method in 2-3 years. While farmers are far from being able to sell their rice in the market, it certainly has helped them become self-sufficient.

"It is my 4th year since I adopted the SRI method and since I have seen many improvements. This year my production has increased by almost 40 percent. Damages from pests also fell by a lot," said Sangay Dorji from Rikhay.

1.4 MT From One Acre

**80 %**Seed Saved

**60 %**Increase in Yield

**40 %**Pest Attack Down

#### Phajo Goenpa Women Make Cookies



In the absence of a market for fruits, cereals, and vegetables many farmers were found to be wasting their farm produce. While they consumed what the family required the rest was either left for it to rot or was fed to the cattle.

Seeing an opening to turn these surplus fruits, vegetables, and cereals into an opportunity, the SJI trained 27 farmers from Phajo Goenpa in Lauri Gewog and Rikhay in Dewathag Gewog to process these farm produce into cookies, pickles, candy, and jam.

"We have many jackfruit trees in our village but we hardly used five percent

of it, rest were either fed to cattle or went waste. So, this year we have planned to reduce the wastage of jackfruit by adding some value," said a farmer from Rikhay Tempa.

Women from a remote village of Phajo Goenpa in Lauri Gewog under Samdrup Jongkhar have now started making own cookies than relying on the imported biscuits. Phajo Goenpa is one of the remoter villages in Samdrup Jongkhar nestled between two dzongkhags Trashigang and Samdrup Jongkhar. The village is also the last settlement in the wilderness adjacent to Merak Gewog in Trashigang.

## **16**Women Enabled

Villages Reached

Meanwhile, Norbu Chayzom from Phojo Goenpa has already ventured into a small business of cookies, candy, and sauce in Lauri. "I am selling some of the products such as local sauces, cookies, and candies in Jompa. I have even sold some through my daughter who is studying in a school in another village," said Norbu Chayzom.

She also said that her cookies have helped reduce the import of cookies since the women in Lauri started preparing packaged biscuits on their own for local rituals. Following the training on food packaging, labeling and safety, Bhutan Agriculture and Food Regulatory Authority has certified 16 women from Samdrup Jongkhar in food processing.

We are also planning to provide the women with another round of training in food processing that will help them scale up their culinary skills.



#### Story of a Lead Farmer



Lead Farmer has played a critical role in imparting sustainable and organic agricultural practices to boost their farming methods to improve community livelihood. As a result of the Lead Farmer Training, five new Lead Farmers from Wangphu, Pemathang, Langchenphu, Dewathang and Orong Gewogs who were trained in farming have further trained 25

more farmers, 5 each in their respective villages (Yarphu, Raling, Jampani, Gayzor and Pheluma).

The five Lead Farmers were trained in April with the help of senior Lead Farmer Karma Wangzom from Garpawoong, Tshering Gyalpo from Bangtsho and M C Gurung from Morong in their respective fields. The

training involved traditional cereal crop and vegetable growing, land management, composting, horticulture, and vegetable seed preparation and biopesticide making.

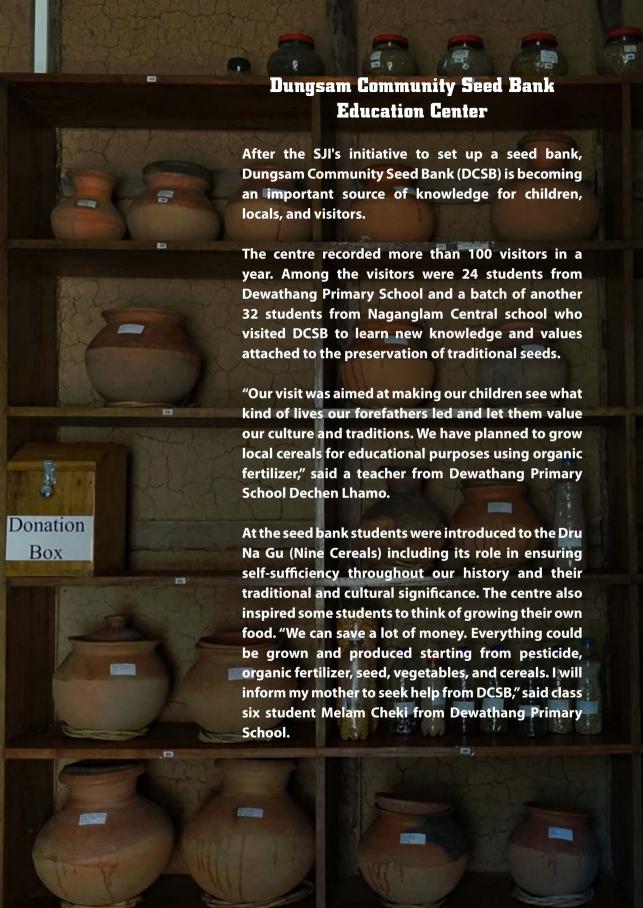
This initiative was the part of Farmer-to-Farmer Extension Program. The training was organized in coordination with Agriculture Extension Officers Lead farmers are now acting as an agent for SJI, promoting organic agriculture in their community. Since 2016, CARLEP-ARDC has been providing financial support to train and create a Lead Farmer model in the district

**25** Farmers Benefited

**20**Lead Farmers
in Total

New Lead
Farmers Trained





#### Mechari GNH Model Village

Our support to revive paddy cultivation in Mechari villager in Orong Gewog, Samdrup Jongkhag after 18 years has helped improve rice self-sufficiency in the community reducing import of rice from outside the country.

Improved rice self-sufficiency also contributes to the government's target to improve rice self-sufficiency by 15 per cent during the 12th Five-Year-Plan.

Our support in well-being enabled the community to construct a Yigja Dungkhor (Billion Vajrasattva Mantra Prayer Wheel) to enhance spiritualism and boost the morale of the villagers. Today, the prayer wheel has become an open space and centre for social life where the elderly citizens gather for prayer, social engagement and catch up with family and friends.

The SJI's support also went into the completion of a renovation of the village Chorten (stupa), which was in dire need of repair. The project was completed as part of the community building project. Our support, however, isn't limited to physical activities, more than 10 youths were trained in multi-skill training including leadership and community building initiative. We also arranged a meeting for our potters from Menchari with experienced potters from Gangzur in Lhuentse Dzongkhag to help them understand the traditional art of pottery in the country. Gangzur is one the oldest villages in the country with traces of pottery in the country.

And today these youths have become agents of change by leading their community out of limitation and challenges. We also helped improve the market for local products like earthen pot, bamboo craft, vegetables, and cereal, etc. by establishing marketing outlets in Dewathang and Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde (municipality) by making use of the existing infrastructure.

#### Youths Revive Paddy Cultivation

If youths could bring change in their communities, Mechari village in Samdrup Jongkhar qualifies as a living proof of what young people could do given the support and enabling environment.

Inspired by their success with farm road renovation in 2018, youths from Menchari in 2019 revived paddy cultivation in their village. Their parents quit paddy cultivation some 18 years ago because of a shortage of helping hand and damaged irrigation channel. Since the village rice field has gone fallow as the villagers started depending on the imported rice for their staple dietary.

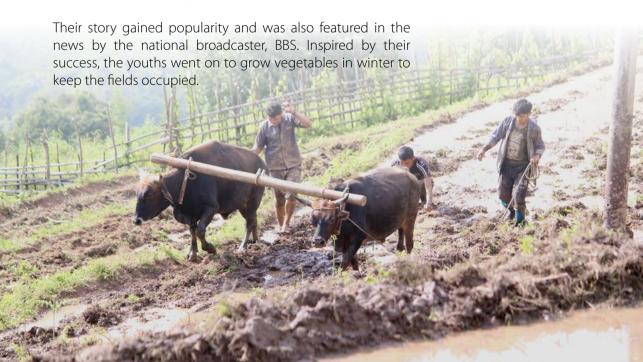
But this changed in 2019 with youths coming up with an idea to bring back their rice fields to life. "We are doing this to be self-sufficient in the future," said one of the youths from Mechari, Sangay Dorji.

Yenten from Menchari said that they wanted to revive and promote paddy cultivation so that they can also be self-sufficient like their parents were once. Youths also wanted to take a different, modern approach and techniques to rice cultivation. They used the SJI's System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method for better yield and new approach.

**2.2** MT from 1 Acre

**1**Acre Cultivated

**13**Households
Engaged



#### Youth Engagement



Building Responsible Citizens go into empowering communities, our youth activities focus on program that enable youth to lead change than to be just a passive receiver of our resources.

In other words, our youth activities enable young people with critical- thinking, knowledge, and skills to help build a democratic culture where citizens learn to take initiatives on their own. By rousing their sense of belongingness and helping

people understand the role of citizens in a democracy, our activities have been successful in injecting a sense of social consciousness and responsibility towards the communities they live in.

And our Community Building Initiative has not just led to several successful projects but have inspired and motivated youths and citizens alike to take initiatives on their own to better their community. The launch of Samdrup Jongkhar Town's

mission and vision in December 2019 was one such remarkable outcomes of the Community Building Initiative.

More than 60 town residents in April 2019 participated in the Visioning Workshop: "Imagining Samdrup Jongkhar Throm 2029" in April 2019 to craft their town's vision and mission. The residents came up with the following mission and vision that they wanted to adopt for the development of the town.

Vision: A GNH-based commercial hub in Eastern Bhutan

Mission: To nurture a commercially and culturally vibrant community living in peace, health and inclusivity.

The residents also adopted several included strategies which а strengthened partnership among the stakeholders and balanced urbanisation sensitive to the promotion of culture, tradition and environmental preservation. Youths attending the Community Mapping in April also resulted in young people leading projects to improve and bring positive change in their respective communities.

Youths in Rikhay village recultivated their fallow rice fields. Mechari youths renovated their village Chorten (stupa), which was in dire need of repair while the young people from Dewathang started a youth space called, "Centre for Joy of Learning".

The youths from Rikhay also came up with an idea to capitalise on jackfruit which grows in abundance but has been somehow left underutilised. They wanted to try processing candy and jam from jackfruit.

A weekly informal youth programme has been initiated to engage youth meaningfully. The concept is an adaptation of Deer Park's "Joy of Learning" and Manzil's idea. The centre will provide young people with a platform to learn and explore their artistic abilities through dance, art, music, performing arts, debates and discourses.

#### **Centre for Joy of Learning**



A parent Dawa Pem from Dewathang is happy that the Centre for Joy of Learning is keeping children occupied and engaged during school breaks. "It is a good initiative for our children as they will be able to spend their vacation fruitfully by learning. Otherwise, they just waste their time watching television," said Dawa Pem.

The Centre for Joy of Learning in Rantsham, Dewathang was started since the town didn't have a center to engage youths. Children could not go to the Youth Centre in Samdrup Jongkhar because

it was 18 kilometers away. Even parents weren't open to sending their children to the center because of the distance.

Keeping to the need, youth mappers from Dewathang initiated a move to open a center in Dewathang as part of their Local Action Project to build community. In partnership with the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, the center was started to engage children meaningfully during their school breaks. The center offers meditation, reading, dance class, and outdoor games, among others.

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Of late senior citizens have also come forward to share folklore with children at the center. Tenzin Zangmo from Garpawoong Middle Secondary School said that the center has been useful for her. "I come here twice a week to read books unlike in the past when I'd usually stay online playing games and chatting," said Tenzin Zangmo.

The center will be providing additional skills-based programs to enhance youth's learning and knowledge.

**24**Youths Trained in Mapping

**3**Local Action Plans Implemented

**0.5**MT Rice Harvested

**1** Chorten Renovated





#### **Towards Efficient Waste Management**

Our Zero Waste practices continue to penetrate deeper into the communities with an increasing number of people and agencies adopting the approach to tackle waste in their localities.

Our cups, plates and mugs made from areca-sheath, bamboo, wood, leaves, and recycled bags are gradually replacing plastic products like cups and mugs in gatherings. In 2019, our sensitisation and awareness programmes on zero waste covered over 1,500 people. Over 900 sets of segregation and 500 zero waste tshog (ritual offering) signages were distributed in Samdrup Jongkhar to encourage people to reduce and manage their waste sustainably and responsibly.

Zero waste initiative has now been expanded to satellite towns like Wamrong in Trashigang Dzongkhag with an idea to encourage sustainable waste management beyond Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag. Zero waste has also set its foot to other adjacent areas in Samdrup Jongkhar like Jomotshangkha and Samdrupcholing. For all these towns, a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) has been built to inculcate a culture of an improved and responsible waste management. The MRF is estimated to prevent waste from going to the landfill by 50 percent.

#### Nu 400,000

**Earned from Recycled Products Sale** 

**6,500**People Sensitised on Zero Waste

900

**Waste Segregation Signages Distributed** 

**500** 

**Zero Waste Tshog Signages Distributed** 

Towards the end of the year, we also took advantage to sensitise on waste management to over 5,000 Throema practitioners from across the country at a three-day Kodrakali Retreat at Rikhay village in Dewathang. More than 195 volunteers from various organisations in Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde also took part in door-todoor sensitisation programme to familiarise town residents on plastic ban in Bhutan.



#### Zero Waste Travels Beyond Samdrup Jongkhar



Concerted efforts are underway to take our practical ideas and successful projects and programmes beyond Samdrup Jongkhar to create a culture of sustainable growth in communities.

And to realise this, we continued working with governmental agencies and local government to expand the horizons of our partnership. Through collaboration with respective dzongkhags, we held, a five-day training on zero waste craft and waste management sensitisation programmes in Mongar and Trashi Yangtse. Following this, we are also planning to provide similar programmes for three more dzongkhags in eastern Bhutan.

The SJI also trained ten students from Dungtse Central School in Phongmey under Trashigang Dzongkhag on zero waste craft in Dewathang. The 10-day training enabled students to recycle waste like plastic wrapper into reusable bags to reduce waste while also learning to adopt and promote a culture of sustainable consumption and growth.

Meanwhile, these students are further training their friends and communities members in Merak and Sakteng on waste crafts. To further inspire these communities, the SJI is planning to provide more programmes to educate, sensitise and train on improving waste management in their communities.

Our efforts also go into training our alumni to unlearn and relearn waste management skills and knowledge.

In 2019, more than 30 residents of Dewathang Town came together reassuring their resolution to reduce the use of plastic. At the training, the shopkeepers reaffirmed their commitment to reducing plastics in the town by refraining to give away plastic carry bags to their customers. Students from Jigme Namgyel Engineering College also came forward to conduct a campaign on "Carry Your Shopping Bag" to advocate sustainable practices of shopping.

Our zero waste programme is also gaining its popularity outside the country. In what appeared to be a rare opportunity, we had the privilege to present zero waste idea at the Sakya Monastery, Bodh Gaya India in December 2019. During our visit, we shared the ideas and ideals of zero waste management to more than 4.000 monks and nuns from across the world. If it works out for the SJL we are planning to reach to Sakya Centre to continue educating and training people on waste management, Lhomon Education and





#### Mindfulnes Retreat Gains Popularity in Schools

Lhomon Education's Mindfulness Retreat is increasingly becoming popular with people from all walks of life attending and many teacher participants from across the country starting the practice in their respective schools.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Mindfulness Retreat from 21-31 December 2019 at the Choki Gyatso Institute in Dewathang, Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag (District Administration) attracted educators, youths, civil servants, counsellors, lecturers and farmer from 11 districts in the country. Teachers from 15 schools across Bhutan made up to 65% of the total participants while 18% were youths. Women constituted 53 % of the total participants.

A teacher participant from Mendrelgang Central School in Tsirang Dzongkhag Leki Wangmo thanking the LME for conducting the retreat said, "The retreat helped me gain better knowledge about meditation and its techniques..."

She further went on to share how the retreat helped her improve at an individual level. "The retreat helped me discipline myself. Now, I wake up as early as 5:20 am ... I have learned from the retreat that whatever we do, we have to do with good intention...," said Leki Wangmo.

The retreat is also gaining its popularity in schools with teacher participants initiating the practice in 15 schools across



nine dzongkhag in Bhutan. Teachers from Mendrelgang Central School, Kheni Lower Secondary School in Trashi Yangtse Dzongkhag and Arekha Middle Secondary School, Chukha Dzongkhag have all initiated the mindfulness schools. Meditations and karma yoga practices are now being integrated into everyday classes.

Lhomon Education is also constantly working towards improving its curriculum to stay relevant and offer learning as a lifelong goal for children. In keeping true to that aspiration, a luminary of some prominent educationists like former Vice Chancellor for the Royal University of Bhutan Dasho Pema Thinley reviewed the curricula for the LME at Dewathang in May 2019.



Our efforts and perseverance to create unique learning took the LME to the Science for monks and nuns Leadership Workshop at Paro which provided youths from the monastic schools an opportunity to serve as mentors for philosophy, language and life skills teachers. The Ladakh conference, 3R (Reading, wRiting, aRithemetic) to 3H (Head,

Heart and Hand) presented an opportunity to discuss contextual curriculum, experiential pedagogy and indigenous wisdom with people from countries as far as Australia and the US.

As we wind down to busy 2019, LME looks into another year of joyful learning.

# Financial Statement as of 31 December 2019

Lho Mon Society

## Receipt and Payment Statement

## Period 1/1/2019 to 31/12/2019

Receipts	Schedule	Amount (Nu.) Amount (Nu.)	Amount (Nu.)	Payment	Schedule	Schedule   Amount (Nu.)   Amount (Nu.)	Amount (Nu.)
Opening Balance				Expenditure	2		7,509,791.00
Cash-in- Hand		8	5,119.60	5,119.60 I. Administrative Expenses	2.1	3,000,999.25	
Cash at Bank			7,476,347.47	7,476,347.47 II. Programme Expenses	2.2	4,508,791.75	
Total Fund received	-		8,354,422.17	8,354,422.17 Purchase of Assets	3		887,984.82
Fund Received during the year	1.1	6,461,506.33		Advance	4		27,587.00
Interest From Bank		557,423.84					
Membership	-	871,402.00		Investment			1,00,000.00
Donation	7:1	124,090.00					
Sale of Vehicle		340,000.00		Opening Balance			
				Cash-in- Hand			49,722.00
				Cash at Bank			7,260,804.42
			15,835,889.24				15,835,889.24



Jounts & Adm. Officer LHO MON SOCIETY

Dewalhang: Samdrup Jongkhar

Dewathano: Samdrup Jongkhar

Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative (SJI)

Program Director

#### **Board of Directors**

- 1. Dasho Ugen Chewang (Vice Chairperson), Thimphu
- 2. Dasho Pema Thinley, Thimphu
- 3. Dasho Kinley Dorji, Thimphu
- 4. Sonam Chuki, Paro
- 5. Sonam Jamtsho, Thimphu
- 6. Kunzang Wangmo, Thimphu
- 7. Pasang Lham Dorjee, Paro
- 8. Kencho Namgyel (Treasurer), Thimphu
- 9. Tashi Tshering Dukpa (Secretary), Thimphu.

#### Funders

























#### **Partners**





































Samdrup Jongkhar Initative Phone: +975 7 260 173 Mobile: 1757 7034/1798 3530 Email: info@sji.bt | Web: www.sji.bt