



THE LEGACY OF MERCY CORPS MONGOLIA

A 22 Years Summative Report

MAY 2021



MERCY CORPS MONGOLIA DONORS AND PARTNERS

Key Donors

Mercy Corps would like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support of our donors, without whom the achievements described herein would not have been possible. Over 22 years, Mercy Corps Mongolia has received \$66 million USD in funding from these and other generous donors to strengthen rural communities. A special thanks to the United States Agency for International Development and the United States Department of Agriculture, that has been a partner throughout Mercy Corps' entire 22 year tenure in Mongolia, providing more than 70% of our funding totaling \$52 million USD.

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Government of Mongolia	British Embassy
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Key Partners

It has been through collaboration with international, national, and local partners in the public and private sector that Mercy Corps was able to contribute to lasting, transformative change to rural Mongolia.

International Partners

PACT	Associates for Rural Development (ARD)
Land O' Lakes	People in Need (ECHO-PIN)
The Asia Foundation	Texas A&M University
World Food Program	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of Mongolia

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Development Solutions	Khushaatiin Khamtiin Khuch Cooperative
KHAN bank	King Consulting LLC
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Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce	Public Administration and New Initiative NGO (PANI)
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Center for Policy Research	Women for Social Progress in Umnugobi aimag
Information and Education Centre	Xanadu Razorback LLC
Khugnu Meej (KM)	Local Initiatives (in Uvurkhangai)

Mongolian Government Partners

We would like to give a special acknowledgement to these national-level ministries and key aimag-level departments and agencies for their valuable collaboration.

Authority Against Corruption (IAAC)	Procurement Policy Department of the Ministry of Finance
General Authority for Veterinary Services (GAVS)	Administration of President of Mongolia
Government Procurement Agency (GPA)	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry (MOFALI)	National Agency of Meteorology and Environmental Management (NAMEM)
Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor	Research Institute of Animal Husbandry (RIAH)
Mongolian University of Life Science (University of Agriculture)	
National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)	

KEY TERMS

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Aimag	Province/State
APPEAL	Active Partnerships and Public Engagement for Accountable Localities program
BDS	Business Development Service
BRICS	Building Rural Institutions through Civil Society program
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPP	Disaster Preparedness Plans
EPG	Extended Producer Group
FIELD	Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled program
GAVS	General Authority for Veterinary Services
Ger	Traditional round tent used by nomads in Mongolia
Gobi I	Gobi Regional Economic Growth Initiative program
Gobi II	Gobi Initiative Phase II
GoM	Government of Mongolia
ICOGS	Improved Competitive Outsourcing of Government Service program
LEGS	Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards
LEWS	Livestock Early Warning System
LGM	Loan Guarantee Mechanism
LTS	Leveraging Tradition and Science in Disaster Risk Reduction program
MCM	Mercy Corps Mongolia
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MSD	Market Systems Development
MORE	Market Opportunities for Rural Entrepreneurs program
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PWD	People with Disabilities
RASP	Rural Agribusinesses Support Program
RCP	Resilient Communities Program
SME	Small- to Mid-size Enterprises
Soum	Municipal districts
SSN	Social Safety Nets program
TAN	Training, Advocacy and Networking for Stronger NGO Sectors program
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USDA	US Department of Agriculture



Photo Credit: Thatcher Cook (2001)

The Dzud: Mongolia's Unique Natural Disaster

Dzuds are winter storms endemic to Mongolia, characterized by harsh cold and abundant snow and ice contributing to drought conditions and poor forage availability in summer. This can lead to widespread livestock losses from freezing or starvation. Mongolia's unique landlocked geography and semi-arid environment is prone to swings in temperature and precipitation, creating perfect conditions for dzuds to occur. Historically, major dzuds occurred once or twice a decade; however, the intersection of climate change and poor environmental governance has led to an increase in the frequency and negative impacts of dzuds in recent decades. Between 1999 and 2002 Mongolia experienced a series of three consecutive winter dzuds that devastated the country, killing 30% of the country's animals. The dzud of 2009-2010 resulted in the death of 26% of livestock nationwide.*

* Sternberg, T. Investigating the presumed causal links between drought and dzud in Mongolia. *Nat Hazards* 92, 27-43 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-017-2848-9>

MERCY CORPS IN MONGOLIA

In 1990 Mongolia began the transition from a socialist state to a full-fledged democracy, participating in the global free market economy. Although this transition came peacefully, many social and economic challenges arose as the Mongolian people and government adjusted to new governance and economic systems. In this new era of growth and competition, tens of thousands of Mongolians started their own businesses, there was a sudden need to adapt to a new economic system, while still preserving traditional ways of life.. Agriculture and animal husbandry represent the foremost livelihood activities for rural populations, as such herders are the first link in rural value chains. Rural herders needed knowledge of the free market to adapt their business practices to harness emerging economic opportunities.

Mercy Corps Mongolia (MCM) was established in 1999 to address the need for innovation in economic development. MCM's first program was the Gobi Regional Economic Growth Initiative, also known as the Gobi Initiative. Traditional livestock herding livelihoods faced economic, environmental, and social vulnerabilities in the free market due to loose social networks, informal markets, geographically inaccessible social services, environmental challenges stemming from severe weather and rangeland degradation, and misaligned governance structures. The Gobi Initiative partnered with Mongolians to face these challenges and prioritize strengthening systems for rural communities' resilience to shocks and stresses through a facilitative market system development approach, that was cutting edge at the time.

This report highlights the legacy of MCM's work with the Mongolian people as we sunset operations after 22 years. MCM has journeyed with Mongolia to reduce vulnerabilities and increase opportunities for through true, meaningful, mutually accountable partnerships that center the development goals of rural communities. MCM's work has enabled rural people to thrive in their traditional livelihoods alongside modernization. With stable and equipped public and private sector institutions Mongolia is well positioned to continue to drive development efforts that support a strong, vibrant rural economy.



“Throughout our time in Mongolia, Mercy Corps has made a sincere effort to ensure that our programs really belong to rural communities themselves. Our job was to build on and support the amazing work being done by Mongolian stakeholders at all levels - from the local to the national - to drive development in the country. We are thankful to have worked with such strong civil society, private sector, and government partners throughout the years to help tackle the complex issues facing Mongolia.”

Wendy Guyot,
Country Director, Mercy Corps Mongolia (2018-2021)

HIGHLIGHTS OF MERCY CORPS MONGOLIA

Mercy Corps programming reduced vulnerabilities and increased opportunities for rural communities in collaboration with the Mongolian government, private and public sector partners supported sustainable economic development through addressing shocks and stressors.

Timeframe: January 1999 - June 2021

Investment: \$66,113,005 USD supporting 40+ programs

Geography: Programming has been carried out in all aimags across Mongolia with head office support in Ulaanbaatar.

Legacy: Rural Mongolians have reduced vulnerabilities and increased opportunities through stronger livelihoods, improved disaster risk management, and good governance.

Highlights:

147,000+ herders, farmers, veterinarians, government representatives, and businesses benefited from training and consultation services to strengthen rural livelihoods.

44,000+ loans facilitated through banking partners and microfinance institutions supporting SMEs, entrepreneurs, and herder businesses for diversification and expansion.

Representatives from all 330 soums and 21 aimags trained to utilize Livestock Early Warning System (LEWS) tools for weather and pasture management and decision-making for herders through stronger disaster risk management. Almost a decade later, in partnership with NEMA, trainings in Livestock in Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) rolled out nationwide and incorporated into soum-level disaster management plans.

40,000+ mobile users nationwide requested 200,000+ text messages with weather and pasture information improving their ability to better plan for possible natural disasters.

250,000+ people benefited from small grants led by 60+ civil society organizations to improve transparency, responsiveness and inclusivity of government and civil society.

310+ civil society organizations received skills building training to improve organizational capacity to engage citizens and partner with government institutions.



Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)





MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Every sunset heralds a new day to come. And tomorrow looks very bright indeed for Mercy Corps' partners and stakeholders in Mongolia. As our agency closes operations in this remarkable country — after two decades of collaborating on innovative and impactful programming — we can see that the future of Mongolia holds even greater resilience and prosperity for all.

When Mercy Corps began working in Mongolia in 1999, we brought bold, forward thinking to the efforts already underway as the country transitioned to a thriving free-market economy and democracy. Mongolia was one of the first countries in which Mercy Corps introduced market systems development and resilience approaches to programming — brand new practices within our sector. These strategies later informed our efforts globally.

In fact, our work around leveraging microfinance to provide accessible loans to rural Mongolians helped steer the direction of Mercy Corps programming in many places. Early on, we made a bold decision to leverage our initial success with the Goviin Ekhel microfinance institution to scale the impact of microfinance nationwide by co-founding XacBank with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). At the time, the banking industry in Mongolia was ripe for disruption and the risks we took resulted in increased opportunities for communities. In the 20 years since, Mercy Corps has applied the learnings from XacBank to become a leader in building microfinance and banking institutions for marginalized and vulnerable people around the world.

Mercy Corps teams have worked on more than 40 projects in every province in Mongolia and have delivered more than \$66,000,000 USD of assistance. Our programming has consistently reflected excellence in our 4Is of innovation, influence, impact and implementation. Here are just a few examples:

- › Innovation: Establishing, and then handing over, the SMS system that serves as early warning/early action for herders and rural communities across the country.
- › Influence: Introducing participatory disease surveillance - a globally accepted methodology - into the GoM's animal health surveillance processes.
- › Impact: Scaling up Livestock in Emergency Guidelines and Standards training and disaster planning activities across the country.
- › Implementation: Enduring tough conditions - and driving great distances - in some of the most challenging weather anywhere MC works.

Mercy Corps Mongolia took an integrated, partner-centered approach to programming at a time when resilience approaches were just emerging in development work. Today we continue to build on our legacy in Mongolia to reduce vulnerabilities and increase opportunities as we move forward in partnership in communities around the world.

Clearly, this is a sunset worth celebrating. Congratulations to our government partners, country team members and stakeholders in Mongolia. The sun is rising on all our days ahead.

Sincerely,

Tjada D'Oyen McKenna
Chief Executive Officer
Mercy Corps Global

Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)

Photo Credit Next Page: Thatcher Cook (2008)

EXTERNAL CONTEXT AND KEY MILESTONES

1999-2001 Three consecutive years of dzud hit Mongolia hard, leaving many herder households without livestock and means for livelihood. During 1999 to 2001 as much as 35% of the nation's livestock were lost due to drought and winter disaster events.

2008 Global economic financial crisis led to dramatic reversal in Mongolia's rapid economic growth

2009 Agreement signed between GoM and Rio Tinto enabling copper exploration in the South Gobi- attracting international investment, creating thousands of jobs, and contributing to economic development

2010 Mongolia was hit with a devastating dzud that killed 26% of its livestock population. The number of animals dropped from 44 million in 2009 to 32.7 million in 2010

MERCY CORPS MONGOLIA KEY MILESTONES

1999

Mercy Corps Mongolia launched with 5-year Gobi Regional Economic Growth Initiative program, known as The Gobi Initiative

Gobi Business News magazine launched with national and regional market price information in English and Mongolian

New participatory methodology piloted in local Economic Workshops designed to jointly identify local development priorities

2000

Goviin Ekhlel LLC, a non-banking MFI, established to provide micro-loans to rural businesses

2002

Business Development Services "Training of Trainers" initiative introduced

Gobi Business News magazine rebranded as Rural Business News and scaled-up with national circulation.

2001

XacBank established through merger of Goviin Ekhlel and UNDP's Golden Fund for Development

Cashmere fairs and auctions helped herders get premium prices through linkages with processors in other areas

2003

MCM expanded into governance programming with Training, Advocacy, and Networking for a Stronger NGO Sector (TAN) program

2004

RASP and Gobi Initiative II launched to support business diversification and expansion in ten provinces

Loan Guarantee Mechanism launched in partnership with XacBank and other commercial banks to provide cash collateral for rural businesses and herders

2007

Business Development Services scaled-up and linked to local networks leveraging local experts

'Herder Alliance' - the first network of herder cooperatives - established to improve cashmere production, sales, and marketing

Launched soum-level forage map products

2005

MCM launched Gobi Forage - the first natural risk management program in Mongolia - and partnered with Texas A&M University to adapt and deploy a forage monitoring system to produce and distribute the first forage forecast maps

2006

Forage forecasts added to radio broadcasts enabling herders to better plan for upcoming winter weather

2009

Livestock Early Warning Systems (LEWS) program launches and MCM expands nationwide

MCM launched FIELD - Mongolia's first-ever program focused on People with Disabilities (PWD)

'Herder Alliance' cooperative model scaled-up to benefit producers through improved terms on sales and purchasing agreements

2010

FIELD advocacy campaigns contributed to GoM passing regulations on Accessibility of Civil Buildings and on Accessibility of Walkways - huge wins to improve access for people with disabilities

2008

Trade Fairs piloted to draw attention to yak wool products and market opportunities

BRICS I program launched to foster open, transparent, and productive relationship among government, private sector, and civil society organizations

Key Program Timeline

- Economic Development —
- Disaster Risk Reduction —
- Good Governance —

MERCY CORPS MONGOLIA TIMELINE 1999-2021



2011 Law on public procurement amended enabling CSOs to play an active role in public procurement

2012 MCM public awareness and advocacy campaigns triggered GoM to create an inclusive environment for PWDs to vote in the parliamentary elections

2018 Animal Health Law and Law on Livestock Genetic Resources came into effect; GAVS established to oversee animal health efforts in Mongolia

2020 COVID-19 pandemic impacts public health, livelihoods, and development in Mongolia

2021 COVID-19 vaccination campaign launched; Presidential elections scheduled

2011

First-ever national Forum on Food Safety organized to raise awareness about health and hygiene in the livestock sector
Innovative psychosocial support initiative launched as part of holistic support package for marginalized households affected by dzud

2012

ICOGS launched to operationalize open and transparent procurement
Anti-corruption action plans improved through public engagement and participation in planning processes

2013

Local government agencies published a comprehensive list of procurement rules giving local businesses the opportunity to bid on government contracts for the first time
"Good Governance Week" brought national attention to good governance and anti-corruption work carried out by local communities and administrations across Mongolia

2014

Government Anti-Corruption Plans developed and approved through participatory processes
First edition of the "Dzud Lessons Book" written and distributed, marrying traditional knowledge and best practices that support herders to manage dzud

2015

Mercy Corps divested shares in XacBank; Resilient Communities Program launched by Mercy Corps Global Fund with proceeds from that sale
Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) adapted for use in Mongolia
"Best Practices of Local Procurement" book highlighting corruption risks and the need for transparency published and distributed nationwide

2017

NEMA signs MOU to integrate SMS system into national framework for early warning

2016

LEGS Handbook translated and training rolled out to focus on incorporating LEGS at the local level
SMS system launched to disseminate weather and pasture information to citizens in dzud-prone, high risk aimags
Humanitarian assistance distributed through a coordinated system of support for people affected by severe dzud

2019

SMS system expanded to include market price information on feed and fodder
Organized First National Veterinary Conference in Mongolia
First Mongolian veterinarians certified as PDS Trainers and Practitioners
RCP livestock sector business expansion projects completed through innovative cost-share grants mechanism
LTS III launched, focusing on institutionalization of PDS, disaster preparedness, and improved pasture management

2018

Under LTS II program, SMS weather and pasture information service expanded to municipalities of Mongolia
Participatory Disease Surveillance (PDS) introduced to Mongolia
New template of soum disaster protection plan using LEGS standards adopted by NEMA and scaled up nationwide

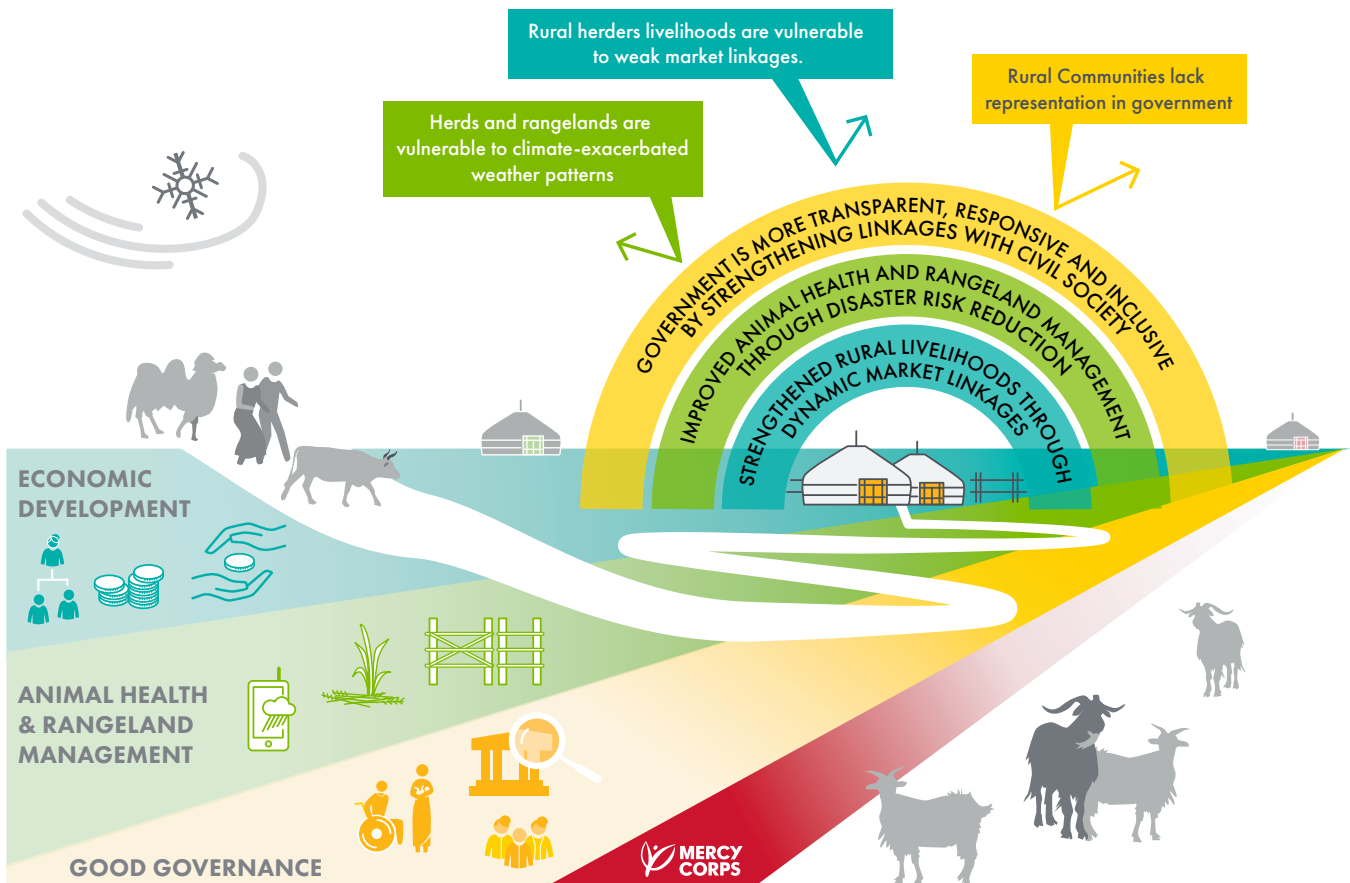
2021

COVID support and assistance delivered to business and government partners
Online curriculum for youth employment and business development skills for veterinarians launched with Mongolian University of Life Sciences
Mercy Corps' sunsets operations in Mongolia



Mercy Corps Approach to Strengthening Livelihoods in Rural Mongolia

Mercy Corps Mongolia has partnered with local and national government agencies, civil society organizations, businesses, and communities for 22 years to achieve the goal of reducing vulnerability and increasing opportunities for rural Mongolians. Through facilitation of partnerships and programming, MCM has supported long lasting change to market systems, governance structures, and social linkages to ensure rural Mongolians livelihoods' are resilient to economic shifts, environmental shocks and stresses, and institutional transitions while retaining distinct and vital cultural traditions.



MCM's Development Change Model

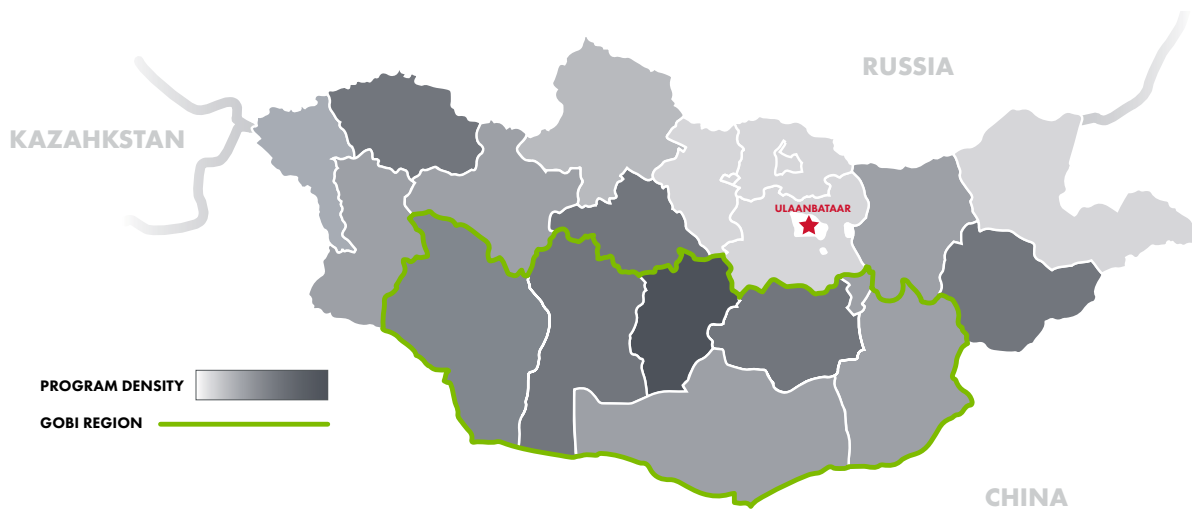
IF herder communities and rural businesses have adaptable business skills, access to finance, and knowledge to engage strong markets, to innovate, expand, and diversify their businesses; and

IF rural communities and government institutions adopt improved disaster risk reduction strategies, and animal health and rangeland management practices and policies; and

IF government and local institutions and organizations have strengthened policies and practices to engage transparently, responsively, and inclusively with rural communities;

THEN rural communities will have reduced vulnerabilities and increased opportunities so that they will be more resilient to shocks and stresses and better equipped to drive rural economic development.

MAP OF INTERVENTION AREAS



MCM'S INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO REDUCE VULNERABILITY AND INCREASE OPPORTUNITY

In the years following Mongolia's transition to democracy, its market economy grew and evolved; however, the country continued to face the cumulative effects of socio-political, economic, and ecological shocks and stresses that threatened its potential for inclusive and sustainable growth. Mercy Corps supported local partners and actors to design targeted and contextualized approaches to reduce vulnerabilities to these shocks and stresses through a market systems approach to the economic development of rural communities, climate sensitive disaster risk reduction policies and practices to mitigate natural disaster, and facilitating the development of a skilled and engaged civil society to support government adoption of transparent, responsive and inclusive good governance.

While MCM's programs centered around three primary sectors—economic development, disaster risk reduction, and good governance—these sectors and our programming within them were highly integrated. Key programs under these sectoral categories helped define the legacy of Mercy Corps' work in Mongolia.

Economic Development. Mercy Corps helped develop, diversify, and strengthen businesses critical to Mongolia's rural economy, particularly in the livestock sector, by supporting entrepreneurs and business owners to develop business skills, access market information, and obtain financial services critical for growth and diversification. MCM was an early adopter of the MSD approach, focusing on enhancing market access and negotiating power for rural livestock producers through market linkages and formation of herder groups and cooperatives.

Disaster Risk Reduction. Mercy Corps supported engagement with communities to make more informed decisions around herding practices, animal health, and seasonal movements through improved access to weather forecasts, pastureland health and forage information, early warning notices, and participatory animal health and epidemiology information. Through market systems thinking and enhanced DRR approaches, rural communities and businesses built resilience capacities in value chains to mitigate

shocks and stresses from recurrent dzuds, addressed the degradation of rangelands, and prevented the subsequent economic hardship associated with non-viable pastureland in rural areas. MCM facilitated systems strengthening and capacity building to address the cumulative effect of sociopolitical, economic, and ecological shocks and stresses, helping ensure inclusive and sustainable growth.

Good Governance. Mercy Corps programs supported the development of government and local institutions' capacity to be responsive, transparent and inclusive to the economic, environmental, and social needs of rural Mongolians. Specifically, MCM programs and partners leveraged opportunities to establish legal, institutional, and administrative processes; enhanced public planning and procurement mechanisms at the local government level; fostered open, transparent and productive relationships between government, civil society and the private sector; and contributed to a more effective and professional rural civil society sector.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Throughout the 22 years, MCM has remained true to the core values of facilitative partnership, centering rural communities' needs, and building resilience. Through the development of public-private dialogue and strong collaborative partnerships, MCM supported the progress of inclusive and sustainable economic growth, good governance, and environmental stewardship.

Committed to Rural Mongolia

From the outset, MCM was established in target aimags to ensure rural communities were engaged and their needs prioritized. In recent years, Mongolia has experienced urban migration at an increasing rate at the expense of services and markets for rural economic centers. Cities do not offer alternative livelihoods for herders without formal education, thus the pattern of urbanization led to further under-resourced and under-engaged livestock economy, which in turn was exacerbated by economic and weather-related shocks and stresses. As the private and public sector increasingly redirected efforts towards urban areas, MCM remained committed to supporting rural communities to reduce vulnerabilities so that livestock-based livelihoods achieve sustained and inclusive growth. Diversified livelihoods with dynamic market linkages and sustainable, resilient environmental management practices were key to building livelihoods resilient to shocks and stresses so that people remain anchored to their traditional rural lifestyles.



“MCM has always worked with rural communities, local governments, and community groups. All the rural areas in Mongolia know Mercy Corps very well. With offices in the aimags, MCM really helped develop the capacity of local governments and herders groups, local NGOs and communities.”

G. Pagma, MORE Project Manager from 2009-2012

Facilitated Partnerships

MCM has intentionally worked with a range of partners including government, civil society, businesses, and rural communities. As a result of meaningful partnerships with actors across a spectrum of sectors and organizations, the programs MCM implemented have first and foremost been owned by the Mongolian people. Prioritization of Mongolian ownership has led to a high-level of institutionalization of the program outcomes, and has built sustainable change over time.



“MCM has been a strong GoM partner. Partnership with the essential government agencies was a key to success in rural Mongolia, MCM selected the right partners, built those partners' capacity and continued implementing projects with them. These partners include NEMA/LEMA, veterinary agency, and the agricultural department”

T. Tungalag, Chief of Animal Health Protection Department, GAVS

Program for Resilient Livelihoods

Mercy Corps believes that households and businesses with stronger resilience capacities are better able to cope with and adapt to existing shocks and stresses; anticipate and prevent future threats; and address underlying challenges and drivers of economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities. Although the concept of resilience is relatively recent in the development sector, Mercy Corps has been applying resilience principles throughout MCM's existence in Mongolia in order to better address the shocks and stresses threatening rural Mongolia's development.



Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)

Resilient Communities Program

The flagship Resilient Communities Program (RCP), funded through Mercy Corps Global Funds, was designed to be the culminating program for MCM and articulate our resilience approach. RCP is unique in its use of a market systems development (MSD) approach to address resilience and disaster risk reduction (DRR) concerns in rural Mongolia, working to prevent the ecological collapse of grazing areas along with the economic hardships that this would bring to herders, enterprises, and communities. By understanding the capacities of individuals and communities up and down the livestock value-chain, RCP strengthened the interconnected economic, social and environmental systems in which they live. Building on the legacy of multi-stakeholder engagement, RCP addressed behaviors, constraints and connections to develop resilience capacities to environmental shocks and stresses. The RCP was at the forefront of defining MC's resilience approach and influenced other development actors in the country to do the same.

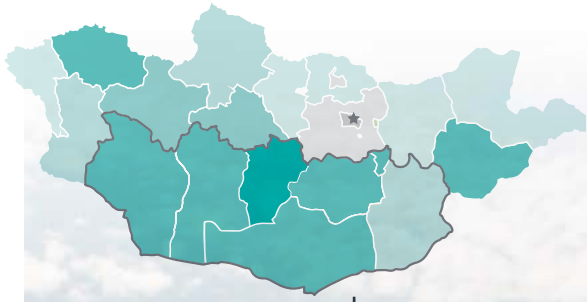
Who contributes to a strong rural economy?

For thousands of years semi-nomadic pastoralists have herded livestock across the Mongolian steppe, migrating seasonally and grounding their livelihoods on the “five snouts” --camels, horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. In Mongolia, herding has traditionally been a source of financial security, social cohesion, protection, and identity. With the entrance of the free market, herders who once relied solely on guaranteed buyers from the centrally planned economy now had to navigate business management and open markets. Herders needed appropriate business skills and knowledge of free market systems such as pricing, group purchasing agreements, and cooperatives, without which the herders' livelihoods were vulnerable. Rural livelihoods have remained the center of our programming by engaging with actors up and down the livestock value-chain, such as:

- › Herders that raise and supply animals
- › Feedlots that fatten cattle for slaughter
- › Veterinarians that provide animal health services
- › Elite animal breeders to develop higher quality more productive herds
- › Rural entrepreneurs and farmers that grow forage, fodder and feed
- › Producers including slaughter and meat processing plants
- › Banks to offer loans and financial services in rural areas
- › Technical experts disperse information on weather, pasture conditions, disease, and pricing
- › Local and National Government facilitate an enabling political and regulatory environment



Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)



From Mercy Corps Mongolia's inception, the continual goal was "to create a robust rural economy and a healthy civil society, which can sustain growth in targeted areas of rural Mongolia." Each consecutive program was grounded in previous experience, success and lessons learned contribute to the creation of sustainable, durable livelihoods for rural communities. MCM strove to articulate the voice of the rural herders and civil society to affect change and elevate the role of the private sector in forging the path forward for Mongolia.

RASP "Rural Agribusiness Support Program" Leveraged success of Gobi Initiative programs to other aimags; focus on support to rural businesses critical to Mongolia's agriculture sector by contributing to herd improvement, value chain development, market access, food safety, animal health, provision of loan guarantees for businesses, herder group development, capacity building of business development service (BDS) providers.

RCP "Resilient Communities Project" Utilizes a market systems development approach to strengthen resilience and bring economic growth to rural Mongolians by: stimulating livestock production, strengthening livestock related value-chains, increasing market information and access, and creating opportunities for economic diversification.

2000

2005

2010

2015

2020

Gobi I "Gobi Regional Economic Growth Initiative Project" Focused on development of financial and business development services, herd and livestock management, rangeland and water management, and increased access to vital business information.

Gobi II "Gobi Regional Economic Growth Initiative Project" Built on Gobi I strengthen rural businesses by delivering of agriculture, business and technical training to herder groups and cooperatives, strengthening market linkages between producers and input suppliers, providing loan guarantees for rural businesses, capacity building of local training and technical assistance providers, and disseminating business information.

MORE "Market Opportunities For Rural Entrepreneurs" Increased incomes of Mongolian herders and local livestock sector actors by increasing market access and expansion, supporting business development services, creating an enabling business environment, and strengthening the process for competitive outsourcing of government services (COGS).



Legacy Of Mercy Corps in Mongolia

Over the past 22 years, MCM programs' have supported rural herders and businesses from all 21 aimags across the nation to build stronger business skills and market linkages, improve resilience capacities to guard livelihoods from natural disasters, and create more transparent, open and responsive governance systems. The report below highlights MCM's transformative contributions to a legacy in three primary sectors:

- › **Economic Development** for improved livelihoods in rural communities
- › **Disaster Risk Reduction** for improved coordination between rural communities and government institutions to strengthen disaster plans and policies to support animal health and rangeland management practices
- › **Good Governance** for strengthened civil society and government institutions to adopt practices and policies that are transparent, responsive and inclusive of rural communities

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mercy Corps Mongolia improved livelihoods in rural communities

When Mongolia transitioned to democracy and a free market economy in the 1990's, state-owned property was privatized allowing herders to once again own their livestock and private businesses to open. For sustainable economic development to occur, rural communities needed the relevant skills to build viable businesses, access to financial mechanisms, and an enabling legal environment. Herders, the first 'links' in the livestock value chain, and small business owners needed entrepreneurial skills, access to finance, and market information to secure their livelihoods within the new economy; rural areas needed infrastructure to connect them to production facilities and markets; and civil society and private sector needed coordination to effectively connect market actors and policymakers.

MCM leveraged local businesses, invested in entrepreneurship, and worked with market systems actors up and down the value chain to build resilient livelihoods for rural Mongolians. First across the Gobi region, and then throughout the entire country, MCM identified ways to stimulate rural markets and facilitate economic growth in rural areas through extended business skills, increased access to finance, and enhanced market engagement.



Enkh Erdene, a member of Eco Han Buyan cooperative, partnered with RCP in 2017 to improve his livestock feed cultivation and production

"We face many challenges here, RCP has helped us access seeds which improved my fodder yield,"

he said. The fodder helped maintain animal health even during extreme winter conditions and improved livestock yield.

Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)

Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)

Legacy: RURAL BUSINESSES ARE BETTER CONNECTED TO VALUE CHAINS THROUGH IMPROVED MARKET LINKAGES

Mercy Corps facilitated creation and development of cooperative groups to strengthen value chain connections

Herders faced challenges operating in the new free market system. Production costs and quality suffered as independent herders' encountered difficulties procuring inputs and selling raw animal products, which in turn stifled income and limited herders' capacity to respond to financial crises and environmental disasters. MCM worked with business associations, production suppliers, processors and producers to increase market access and linkages for rural herders and small businesses to expand their product diversity and demand, and share business information across the entire value chain.

As herders formalized as business entities, MCM provided business training to ensure they were legally compliant, and supported coordination through the formation of cooperatives and extended producer groups (EPGs). At first herders were wary of organizing, but education, capacity building, access to market information, improved market linkages, and access to loans all contributed to herders and small businesses embracing the formation of cooperatives. Government support and a business-friendly legal environment also positively shifted perceptions of cooperatives and EPGs.

- › Through Gobi I, MCM helped form 250 herder groups with 10,000 members, in six Gobi aimags and standardized a business plan format appropriate for rural businesses.
- › Through Gobi II, 839 herder groups and cooperatives, and 305 non-herder businesses in the Gobi region prepared and implemented formal business plans that contributed to sales amounting to \$11.2 million USD between 2004 and 2008. Herder group representatives in each aimag received intensive business plan training with ongoing technical support from MCM.
- › During the MORE program, MCM coordinated with cooperatives and herder groups to form 28 EPGs which helped expand market reach, production quality, strengthened negotiating power, and allowed groups to deliver larger contracts by working collaboratively.

The formation of herder groups, cooperatives, and EPGs contributed to the development of agricultural commodity markets, helped rural producers recognize the benefits of working together, increased tax flow to local economies, created jobs and enhanced the quality and quantity of agricultural outputs.

During this time, the number of registered cooperatives increased by 16 times. In 2011, Parliament passed a law to consider agricultural cooperatives a legal body that can

Economic Development Alignment with Government Priorities

Mercy Corps entered Mongolia in 1999 to work alongside Mongolians to establish systems, build networks, and strengthen institutions with the goal of providing support for the growing business ecosystem, strengthening partnerships between the government and the private sector, and enhancing the skills of leaders in both business and government. MCM closely aligned program objectives with Government of Mongolia (GoM) priorities to ensure the relevance of program activities and outcomes to the Mongolian context, and to support GoM's development of sound processes, policies, and procedures. Close collaboration on GoM's 2003 "Year of the Cooperative" program, support for the "White Revolution" initiative to support dairy production in the Gobi, and ensuring small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are in compliance with GoM policies and standards, are some of the ways that MCM has shown dedication to the strategies underpinning Mongolia's growth and development.

participate in commodity exchanges, and the GoM began providing price incentives for raw materials (especially wool and skins) sold. This shift signaled the start of a new era for agricultural cooperatives. The success of cooperatives helped local banks expand their market and income by attracting more clients. It also sparked the growth of business development service providers and local NGOs began offering capacity building trainings and consultancies for rural businesses.



Photo Credit: Thatcher Cook (2008)

Dairy Producer from Bayan Zag herder group in Umnugobi Aimag

"MCM partners with local communities, especially with herders' groups, and cooperatives, and has a unique approach to value chain development, community mobilization, linking businesses and communities, and prioritizing partnership."

-U. Erdenebileg, Umnugobi Aimag Coordinator

Mercy Corps supported business planning with herder groups

As informal herder businesses formalized themselves as legal entities into cooperatives, partnerships, and LLCs MCM assisted groups in the transition through business planning, management and operations. As a result of Gobi Initiative, MORE and RASP program efforts, herders increasingly made an important shift in perspective, as they began to view their work as a “business” as opposed to a “family livelihood.”

Mercy Corps initiated Market Days to provide a platform for rural herders to showcase their products and services

In the early 2000s, production costs were high for remote businesses who had limited access to market information and pricing resulting in rural businesses selling their goods to traders below market price. Thorough Market Days and Trade Fairs MCM brought together buyers and sellers of a variety of goods such as cashmere, dairy, meat, wool, as well as wood, handicrafts and construction materials to develop market linkages, exchange market information, and establish relationships for production contracts.

Initially, MCM was largely responsible for organizing the Market Days and Trade Fairs from 2000-2015 as local stakeholders including aimag government, businesses and nonprofits slowly took over the cost and administrative work of arranging the events until they began to organise the events themselves.

Between 2000-2015, Mercy Corps supported 325 Market Days and Trade Fairs which attracted 1.6 million people and resulted in \$14.4M USD in sales for the more than 25,000 exhibitors.

Legacy: RURAL HERDERS AND BUSINESSES OWNERS HAVE IMPROVED ADAPTABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS TO GROW RESILIENT BUSINESSES

Mercy Corps established a sustainable consulting model for Business Development Services (BDS) providers

To embed access to business resources locally, MCM fostered a network of expert business consultants to support rural business owners to grow their operations and better meet market demand. MCM trained local consultants as BDS providers and established networks of providers to exchange learning and provide services for rural entrepreneurs and herders.

› Under the Gobi I program, MCM began to build a network of fully functioning, independent and fee-based BDS providers to help local business owners identify demand, diversify product offerings, and design marketing plans and funding proposals, as well as learn how to effectively work with local government to meet quality standards.

› In 2010, MCM supported the establishment of Zuvluh.mn through a partnership with InfoCon to connect BDS providers with each other and with clients; making it possible for them to share resources, find new business information, make business linkages, and set performance standards for service delivery through open competition.

› In 2012, by the end of the MORE & RASP programs BDS providers were training additional consultants and operating entirely independent of MCM through a fee-based model.

Between 1999-2012, 130,000+ business owners participated in more than 12,000 trainings and consultancies and 3,400 of the business owners developed business plans and received loans.

› Business owners who attend BDS trainings under the Gobi Initiative and RASP programs said their incomes rose 10-15% due to training and technical assistance provided by BDS consultants

Mercy Corps improved access to business information for rural businesses and herders

As rural herders began to formalize as businesses and gain necessary business skills, The Gobi Initiative started the magazine, television and radio platform Rural Business News (RBN) to address the parallel need for access to timely, accurate national and regional business information and tips, weather forecast and policy news. As part of RBN the popular and innovative Herder from the Future radio program reached 75% of all rural residents in the target areas, breaking barriers to information by providing usable news to rural business people for the first time. Another RBN offering was Market Watch - described as an idea ahead of its time - provided timely and accurate commodity price information, significantly reducing discriminatory regional pricing differences for rural herders. Through a partnership between Market Watch and national cellular phone operator MobiCom, a new messaging service was initiated that offered raw material price information on a daily basis from “Market Watchers” in every aimag center, and the capital of Ulaanbaatar.

› Market Watch, launched in 2000 and automated in 2008, reduced rural and urban price differentials and provided distant herders and businesses with daily market prices that facilitated better financial decision making. Market Watchers

provided market prices for 44 regular, and 7 seasonal commodities and raw materials daily by SMS messages.

- › At the close of The Gobi Initiative in 2009 a Mongolian NGO, Media for Business (M4B), took over production of RBN radio program and magazine, maintaining the website and managing the Market Watch information system.
- › Market Watch continued to be supported by the MORE program until 2012 when it was connected with the BDS providers network under Zuvluh.mn (see above). Under this new structure, price information for meat, wool, cashmere, flour and rice available in local markets was collected by Market Watchers and sent weekly to Zuvluh.mn and EPGs for distribution to local BDS providers.
- › In 2019, MCM and WFP collaborated with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the National Statistics Office (NSO) to build on existing databases, collection, and dissemination mechanisms in Mongolia, (such as the SMS on-demand system for weather information created by MCM and NEMA under the LTS II project) to disseminate hay price information to mobile phone users in 30 target soums and all 21 aimag centers.

Legacy: RURAL BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS HAVE IMPROVED ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES TO START, EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY THEIR BUSINESSES

Mercy Corps provided access to finance for rural businesses and entrepreneurs through innovative Loan Guarantee Mechanisms (LGM)

Business growth and diversification requires capital, however, SMEs are often not eligible for loans due to insufficient collateral or lack of financial history to prove they have the capacity to manage a loan. In 2004, under the RASP program, MCM launched the LGM that facilitated access to credit from partnering commercial banks to help SMEs have access to the capital needed to support business expansion and diversification. Under LGM, MCM guaranteed the collateral and negotiated lower interest rates for SME loans. MCM also helped SMEs develop sound business plans and learn how to manage their loans so that they would gain the financial competency needed to secure loans in the future. The LGM was a crucial component of the overall strategy for supporting rural business diversification that was initiated under The Gobi Initiative in 2000 and continued under RASP and MORE programs until 2012.

Agreements were signed with BDS providers to receive a commission for supporting LGM clients through business plan development, and monitoring loan utilization and repayment. 627 loans were facilitated in partnership with local BDS providers. The goal was to expand the LGM program with a foundation for sustainable business development in rural areas well into the future.



Photo Credit: Thatcher Cook (2001)

Business Owners Access Loan to Grow and Diversify Bakery

Purevdorj and his wife had a small bakery in Uvurkhangai aimag. In 2009 the bakery had 4 employees, and took out a 5 million MNT loan to expand the family business, LGM provided 50% collateral for the loan. The business owners became very involved in capacity building events MCM programs offered, they attended a cake technology training under RASP, and a business management training organized by Development Solutions, NGO. In 2011, the business took another 20 million MNT loan as part of LGM and built a production facility and bought updated equipment; as a result they were able to expand to 15 employees, produce more than ten kinds of baked products, offer 7-8 kinds of fast food products and operate a café, they grew to be the second largest producer of prepared food in the aimag.



Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)

Resilient Communities Program (RCP), Elite Khuns LLC

Livestock Handling Equipment Business Expansion and Diversification

Elite Khuns LLC is a youth-led business which produces and sells livestock crushes, head gates, and portable corrals. In partnership with RCP, the company launched a business expansion project to increase access to their innovative livestock handling equipment, and contribute to the delivery of high quality animal health and breeding services.

Through the work with RCP, Elite Khuns improved the efficiency and quality of equipment production by establishing a 150m² indoor workshop and equipping it with state-of-the-art welding equipment. Production capacity more than tripled, and sales income climbed six times higher than the previous year.

Mercy Corps MFI Led to Expanded Banking Options for Rural Mongolia

In 2000, Mercy Corps was at the forefront of innovative thinking in financial services in Mongolia. Though NGOs typically did not open banks, Mercy Corps saw a need in the market for rural businesses to access loans for startup and expansion at reasonable rates. Under Gobi I, Mercy Corps established Goviin Ekhel (“Gobi Beginning”) a for-profit, non-banking financial institution to address the need for accessible and transparent commercial banking options for small businesses in rural areas. Within two years, the institution had issued 300 loans in five Gobi aimags valued at nearly \$1M USD with a nearly 100% repayment rate - signalling the need for, and interest in financial services for rural business owners.

To exact scalable and transformational change in the financial services sector, Goviin Ekhel merged with UNDP sponsored “Golden Fund for Development” to co-found XacBank (pronounced ‘hahs-bank’) with a mission to serve both rural clients and the growing number of urban ger district residents. This new entity had coverage across the entire country, giving SMEs an opportunity to access full banking services for their business needs. XacBank continued to grow into a leading national commercial banking institution, maintaining a mandate to reach rural communities.

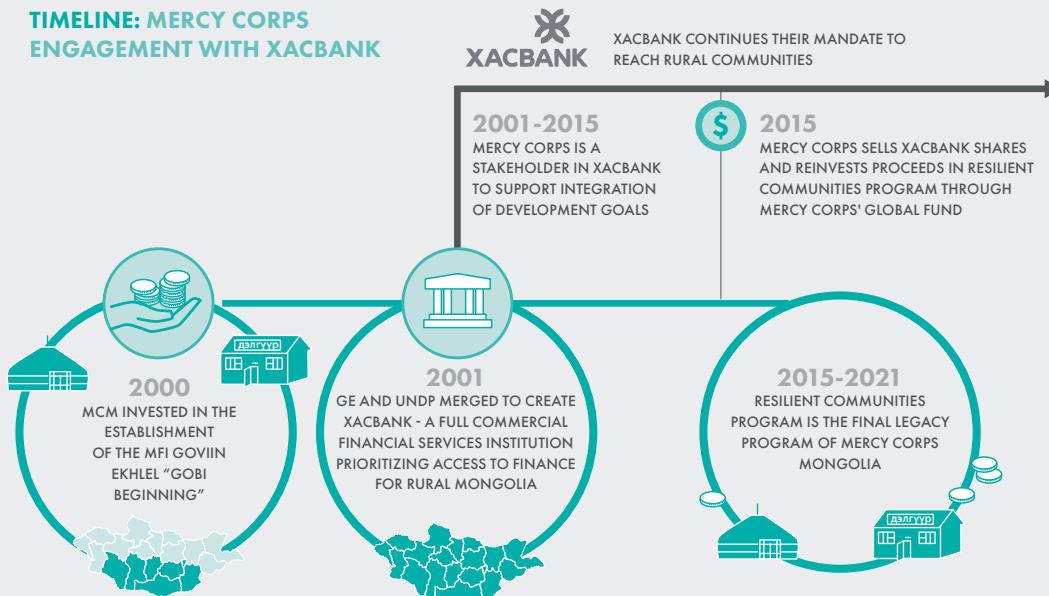
Though Mercy Corps staff supported XacBank in an advisory role for a number of years, the agency formally separated from the bank in 2015 when our shares were

sold to other investors. Mercy Corps’ proceeds from selling our shares were reinvested into the continued economic development work of Mercy Corps in rural Mongolia through the Resilient Communities Program.

According to its website, today XacBank has 1 million + customers through 76 branches in all 21 of Mongolia’s aimags - making it the country’s largest microfinance institution and second largest bank. The organization’s successful transition from a development project to socially-driven commercial bank has made it a model in microfinance circles.*

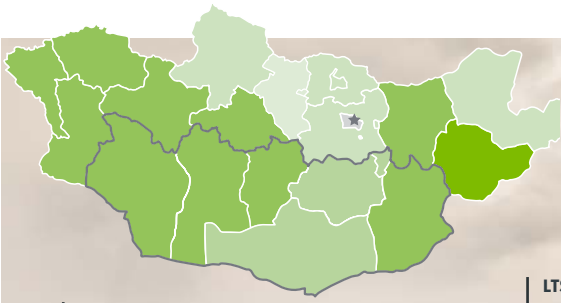
* <https://www.xacbank.mn/page/about>

TIMELINE: MERCY CORPS ENGAGEMENT WITH XACBANK



“XacBank was likely one of the most successful MFI endeavors in all of Asia because it grew from nothing to more than \$1B in assets.”

Steve Mitchell, Former CFO and VP of Financial Services of Mercy Corps (2002-2021) and XacBank Board Member (2003-2015)



Winter and extreme weather are a fact of life in Mongolia which has been exacerbated by rangeland degradation and climate change. Heavy losses of livestock and dzud's impact on pastoral livelihoods prompted Mercy Corps Mongolia to implement natural risk management programs in coordination with communities and the Government of Mongolia to develop natural disaster early warning systems and strengthen capacity of rural communities to prepare, respond to, and mitigate impacts of natural disasters.

Gobi Forage Developed information and communication infrastructure and analysis delivery system to provide herders and government officials with information on current and forecasted forage conditions and animal nutrition, and early warning information system for herders and government authorities.

LTS I "Leveraging Tradition And Science In Disaster Risk Reduction In Mongolia" Helped mitigate dzud risks for herders and rural economies by extending the reach and use of forecasting systems and consolidating learning and best practices in managing responses.

LTS III "Leveraging Tradition and Science In Disaster Risk Reduction In Mongolia" Engaged stakeholders at all levels- from national institutions to herders- to institutionalize disaster risk reduction approaches, transboundary animal disease surveillance, and pastureland management efforts led by

2000

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LEWS "Livestock Early Warning System" Collected and analyzed data from all 21 aimags to develop, publish and disseminate 12 types of regional maps of near real-time information on pasture conditions and nutrition, and trained national scientists on use of "PHYGROW" Forage Modeling System to maintain maps.

LTS II "Leveraging Tradition And Science In Disaster Risk Reduction In Mongolia" Established a national SMS system for weather and pasture information delivered directly to herders; strengthened aimag and soum-level capacity on disaster planning, preparation and mitigation; introduced Participatory Disease Surveillance (PDS) to help identify and address outbreaks of animal disease in the livestock sector; introduced local communities to sustainable mitigation activities based on the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS).



DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Mercy Corps Mongolia improved coordination between rural communities and government institutions to strengthen disaster plans and policies that support animal health and rangeland management practices

While support to livestock producers and businesses resulted in significant economic progress, the livestock economy was still extremely vulnerable to environmental shocks and stresses that could wipe out economic gains overnight if not properly managed. This spurred MCM to deepen our disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience work to better understand historical, present, and future hazards and risks to develop measures to mitigate them and help herders and businesses manage and cope with future shocks and stresses.

Mongolia is known for its extreme weather - short hot summers and long cold winters make life challenging for the 181,000 rural households who raise livestock across Mongolia's vast tracts of rangeland. Although there have been economic and demographic shifts in the modern era, the traditional Mongolian identity is still based on herding and pastoralist practices. When dzuds destroy pastureland critical to feeding large herds, rural livelihoods are devastated. Climate change has compounded the impact of these natural disasters and increased their frequency. Since 2000, dzuds have killed over 21 million livestock.¹ From 1999 to 2002, Mongolia experienced a series of droughts and dzuds that killed 12 million head of livestock nationwide, roughly 30% of the livestock population at the time.²

The increasing severity and frequency of dzud and drought due to climate change is intensified by the overpopulation of livestock raised by herders across Mongolia which often exceeds the land's carrying capacity by 20-30%. The large herds overgraze pasturelands contributing to deforestation and desertification. These factors coupled with drought induced depletion of water resources, poor coordination and land management practices, underdeveloped animal health practices and policies are threats to herd health and herder livelihoods.

MCM worked with government institutions and rural communities including herders, farmers, veterinarians, and emergency personnel to develop and adopt cutting edge disaster plans, technologically advanced weather information communication channels, and science-based animal health and rangeland management practices.

Legacy: GOM HAS IMPROVED DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PRACTICES TO SUPPORT RURAL COMMUNITIES

Mercy Corps facilitated the development and institutionalization of science-based early warning information services nationwide

Since 2001, Mongolia has worked to improve its national emergency management system and incorporate science-based forecasting into its dzud response initiatives. Building on the successes of the Gobi Forage program, MCM partnered with GoM in 2009 to launch the Livestock Early Warning System (LEWS) program to connect all aimags with maps showing current forage availability and weather forecasting. These maps helped herders plan where to graze their livestock and to more effectively prepare for upcoming weather events.

› LEWS maps supported coordinated herder movement to areas where forage density could sustain additional animals. At the national level, the maps indicated "hot spots" where drought or dzud were most severe for coordination of disaster relief efforts and pinpointed areas that needed fodder for livestock.

› Through television and print, thousands of herders, rural businesses, and local officials received LEWS forecast maps. Hundreds of herders from more than 160 cooperatives received compilations of LEWS materials, and officials across the nation received technical training and policy decision-making tools based on LEWS products to help them make data-driven decisions about natural resource management

1 Mongolian National Statistic Office, <https://www.1212.mn//>

2 UNDP, 2010, Dzud Early Recovery Program https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/MNG/00059396_Dzud%20early%20recovery_ProDoc.pdf

Rural Mongolians used traditional knowledge to anticipate the many factors that lead to dzud conditions, as well as factors that increase communities' vulnerability to dzud. However, with technology in place and functioning national emergency management infrastructure, GoM now has the ability to plan and allocate resources to better support herders and rural communities with time and location specific warning information. Targeted and timely information sharing leverages herders' traditional knowledge to ameliorate any barriers to planning and preparedness.

Before MCM began work through Gobi Forage and the LEWS program, there was a lack of written analysis, guidelines, and handbooks in Mongolian about disaster preparedness and response planning. In response to the need for practical disaster preparation guidance, MCM published the Dzud Lessons Book, with a herder audience in mind. The Dzud Lessons Book reached more than 86,000 rural citizens and herders and was an important first step towards improving herder preparation practices for extreme weather.

› LEWS Institutionalized Science-Based Weather and Forage Maps

The first LEWS technology was developed by Texas AgriLife Research in East Africa and successfully deployed it in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Ethiopia.³ LEWS relies on the establishment of a series of carefully selected monitoring ground sites where vegetation is measured and reflected in a rangeland forage simulation model. The vegetation growth simulation model, PHYGROW, uses associated soils, grazing rules and satellite-based weather data as inputs. The data processing and modeling employs advanced geo-statistical processing methods. Maps showing daily estimates of forage production, deviation from normal forage on offer, and associated percentile ranking coupled with satellite greenness data are produced on a monthly basis. The maps carry information on forage deficiencies and provide a 60-day forecast of likely forage conditions. LEWS technology was institutionalized within the National Agency of Meteorology and Environmental Management (NAMEM).



Forage Map. The LEWS team used maps such as this to update government partners to support rangeland management and through community outreach to raise awareness with herders to make forage plans.

Mercy Corps improved national standards for disaster risk reduction plans and procedures

With improved early warning information, MCM under the Leveraging Tradition and Science in Mongolia (LTS) program partnered with NEMA to introduce Livestock in Emergency Guidelines and Standards (LEGS) and adapt it to the Mongolian context. LEGS is set of international guidelines and standards for designing, implementing, and evaluating livestock interventions to help people affected by humanitarian crises. LEGS is based on three livelihoods objectives: to provide rapid assistance, to protect livestock assets, and to rebuild the livestock assets of crisis-affected communities. The introduction of LEGS helped bring international standards into the homes of herders and the halls of local government, creating a new national standard for disaster preparedness. The LEGS Mongolian translation was authorized by the LEGS Committee and funded by the FAO. Once the translation was complete, NEMA, MCM, and FAO collaborated to facilitate LEGS training of trainers (ToT) for Local Emergency Management Agency of Mongolia (LEMA) officers and soum governors offices to use LEGS tools to increase aimag and soum level capacity to provide emergency planning and mitigation training at the community level. LEGS training was far reaching through FAO and now almost all soums have disaster preparedness plans.

MCM supported the early adoption of LEGS disaster preparedness plans under LTS II:

- › 4,000+ herders, farmers, veterinarians, and emergency personnel were taught how to collaborate on disaster plan development using LEGS.
- › 8,000+ rural citizens including local government, private sector and herders attended 375 LEGS training, and as a result 292 soums updated their Disaster Preparedness Plans (DPP) in accordance with LEGS.
- › 43 soums developed new Pasture Management Plans (PMP) contributing to the PMP model being adopted as the national standard across the country.
- › 100 soum disaster plans revised in compliance with LEGS were approved for implementation by the district-wide and provincial governments.
- › LEGS was institutionalized within NEMA and accepted as standard practice for disaster preparedness planning in Mongolia.

³ A member of The Texas A&M University System, Texas AgriLife Research (formerly the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station) consists of doctoral-level scientists who are the top experts in their respective fields. More at <https://cnrit.tamu.edu/index.php/mongolia-lews/>

› Advanced Weather Information SMS System Established with the GoM

In 2015 under the LTS II program MCM in collaboration with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) launched an advanced weather information SMS system to connect herders across the country to real-time, on-demand local level weather and forage information directly through their mobile phones. By 2017, more than 50,000 herders were using the SMS system to strengthen their ability to make advanced plans for camp and herd migration, shearing sheep, cutting hay, and harvesting crops based on changing weather conditions. Additionally, the SMS system helped farmers decide when to harvest, and school teachers decide when to keep their students indoors in the face of environmental hazards.

The platform was so effective that NEMA and MCM was approached by organizations like People in Need, the UK Space Agency, and the World Food Programme to leverage SMS technology to facilitate on-demand access to higher-density weather forecasts and rangeland conditions as well as real-time market prices—information that can drive strengthened resilience and economic stability for the entire country.

In 2017, NEMA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with four national mobile service providers agreeing to grant the platform a single public service phone number which expanded coverage to all mobile phone users in Mongolia, improved service quality, and reduced service costs. Through the years, the services were expanded to include price information and 12 types of weather and pasture information retrieved from darksky.net and NAMEM. In 2019, MCM and WFP supported the expansion of the SMS system by extending the existing partnership with NEMA and NAMEM to include and the National Statistics Office (NSO) to provide market prices for hay and wheat bran within the SMS system.

From the start, the SMS system was developed with the understanding that NEMA would have complete ownership of the platform, the services, and information once launched. A formal 'hand over' celebration was concluded in March 2018, after which MCM continued to provide financial support as needed, including support developing television advertisements and other outreach products. MCM also provided training and technical support to NEMA engineers related to upkeep and use of the system, and in December 2019, MCM handed over a network attached storage

device and a GIS computer. NEMA now manages this equipment which increases data storage capacity and data management of the SMS messaging system and ensures the efficient operation of the SMS system server.

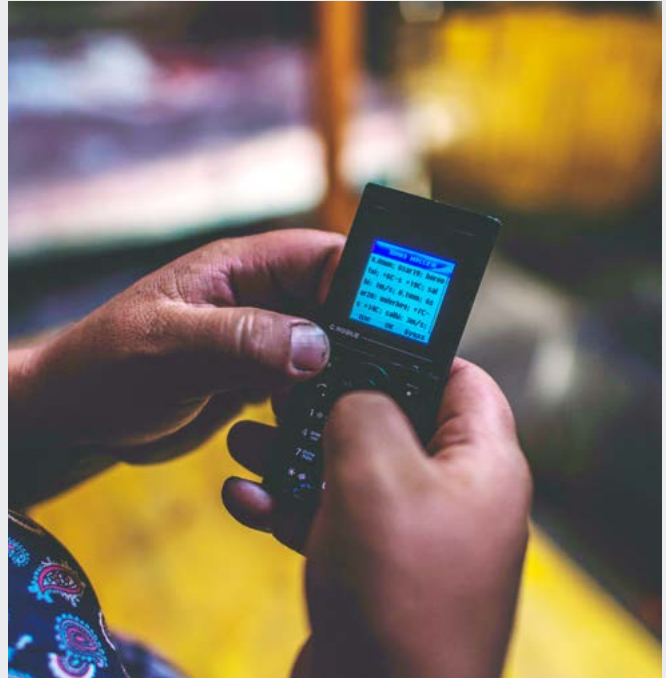


Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)

In the Tsenher soum of Arkhangai aimag herders Gansukh and his wife Baigalmaa, used the SMS system to become more productive and resilient in their herding practices. Baigalmaa said, “In 2009 we lost 60% of our animals to harsh winter conditions. But last winter we started using the SMS system and we only lost 15% of just the small animals.”

Legacy: GOM IMPROVED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES THAT SUPPORTED ANIMAL AND RANGELAND HEALTH

Mercy Corps worked with GoM to develop and adopt rangeland management practices

Uncontrolled livestock population growth and poor pasture management has led to overgrazing and rangeland degradation, deforestation, and desertification. Without healthy rangelands, animals lack proper nutrition and are prone to a variety of diseases.

› MCM worked with local governments and communities to demonstrate the value of natural resource management approach to rangeland management to motivate adoption of best practices. For example, MCM collaborated with the local Department of Agriculture in pilot soums to demonstrate the benefits of fencing, resting, and fertilizing pastures, pasture rotation techniques, and scientific approaches to improve pasture quality.



Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)

Batsaikhan, a herder in Tsenher soum, Arkhangai aimag. After receiving the Dzud Lessons Book, he has learned how to prepare feed for winter to keep his animals healthy and prevent them from dying in the harsh winter months. Batsaikhan said, “In the winter of 2010 I lost more than 60% of my herd”, he said, “Losing fewer animals now means I’ve been less stressed.”

Mercy Corps improved animal health practices policies

Transboundary Animal Diseases (TAD) threaten the food security and livelihoods of herding families and their dependents. Controlling TADs requires timely detection and reporting of animal diseases which is difficult for remote herders who move with the seasons and lack access to veterinary services. Participatory disease surveillance (PDS) - a globally accepted methodology that applies participatory methods to epidemiological research and disease surveillance - is one of the most successful ways to identify, mitigate and manage TAD. Under the LTS II program, initial steps were taken to address the risks and impacts of TAD affecting rural Mongolia through the introduction of PDS to the newly formed Mongolian General Authority for Veterinary Services (GAVS). PDS was aptly suited to enlist the participation and knowledge of herders and veterinary experts in the tracking and management of animal diseases affecting Mongolian herders.

- › 2,935 herders were involved in PDS field work. With the vast distances and semi-nomadic nature of animal husbandry in Mongolia, educating herders was critical to preventing major outbreaks.
- › LTS II & III supported the certification of 4 Mongolian PDS trainers and 37 certified practitioners in the country. When MCM introduced PDS in Mongolia, there were no PDS specialists in-country.
- › Under LTS III in 2019, GAVS incorporated the PDS approach into the government’s ongoing surveillance efforts. Under an MoU signed by MC and GAVS, GAVS appointed

a national focal point of PDS and agreed to promote PDS tools among local communities, herders, veterinary services, and governments throughout the project period.

PDS CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The Participatory Epidemiology Network for Animal and People Health (PENAPH) oversees the certification process for a global cadre of Practitioners, Trainers, and Master Trainers able to practice and train in innovative PDS methods. A practitioner is an expert who has been trained in the PDS methodology and can work with herders and communities to use PDS tools to mitigate, identify, and control animal disease.

Requirements for certification as a PDS/PE Practitioner:

1. PE Introductory course (10 days)
2. Field work in PE (minimum of 20 days in the field prior to refresher course)
3. PE Refresher course

A PDS trainer is a veterinarian who has received trainer certification from a Master Trainer. Trainers are then able to oversee the certification process for practitioners, and submit them for PENAPH certification Requirements for certification as a PDS/PE Trainer:

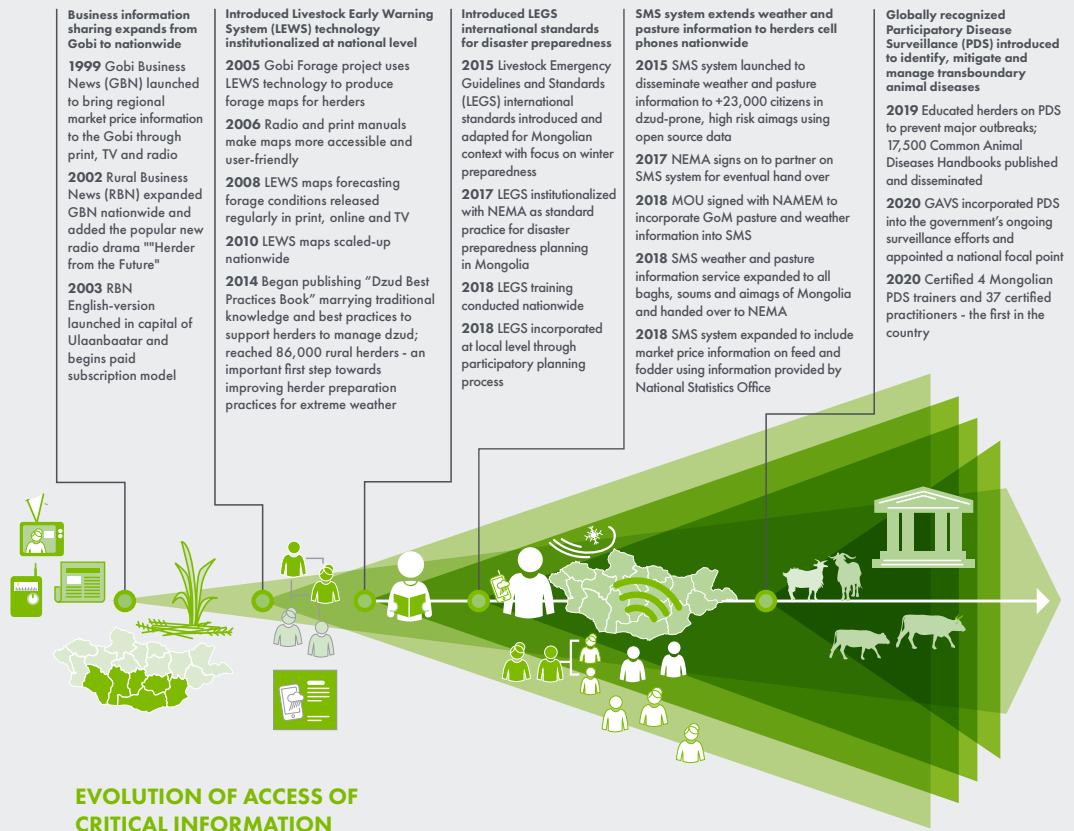
PE practitioners become PE trainers after completion of the following:

1. Receive Practitioner certification
2. PE Training of Trainers course (6 days)
3. Conduct a PE Introductory course mentored by a Master Trainer

Master Trainers are typically Trainers that have been working in the PDS field for a number of years and are recommended for consideration to the PENAPH network by another Master Trainer. There are not currently any Mongolian Master Trainers.

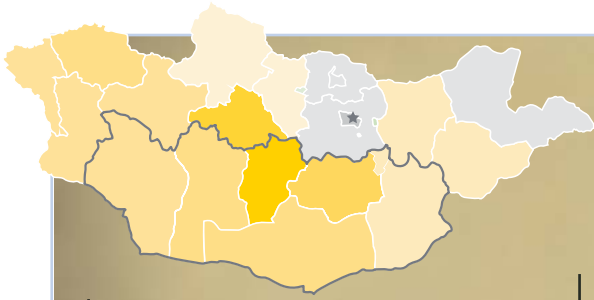
Evolution of Weather and Market Information Flow to Support Rural Livelihoods

The evolution of the SMS system started with collecting and distributing weather information through printed maps to support better planning and preparation for dzud response, then expanded and adapted through consultations and negotiations with local communities, civil society, and government stakeholders to include pastureland, and market price information.



Mercy Corps staff lead a training session on animal health for 60 herders from four provinces in Mongolia at the Hasu Shivert Camp.

Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)



When Mercy Corps came to Mongolia in 1999 the new democratic government had limited experience with the role of civil society. Citizens were not engaged in decision-making which hindered economic development, especially in rural areas where civil society organizations and government agencies were not equipped to consult with communities on service provision, livelihoods, or policy issues. Mercy Corps supported local stakeholders' efforts to build up civil society and government institutions to better work with citizens and adopt responsive and inclusive policies; address low level corruption through developing transparent, open, and participatory processes; and introduce citizens to their role in accountability and advocacy.

TAN "Training, Advocacy and Networking"

Developed the capacity of rural CSOs to effectively coordinate with government bodies, build capacities to expand and improve their services to communities, engage with citizens, and form CSO networks to improve their advocacy and outreach.

BRICS II "Building Rural Institutions through Civil Society"

Promoted open, transparent and competitive outsourcing, demonstrated how to improve health service accessibility and quality through customer satisfaction surveys and by updating IT facilities and improving social welfare structures for people with disabilities.

FIELD II "Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled"

In partnership with Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) and a range of stakeholders implemented national accessibility standards, educated citizens about accessibility standards, improved organizational capacities of DPOs, and assisted PWDs to participate in elections.

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BRICS I "Building Rural Institutions through Civil Society"

Fostered open, transparent, and productive relationship among government, private sector, and civil society organizations through demonstrating specific approaches, such as budget monitoring and procurement of health services and building capacities of CSOs and government.

FIELD I "Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled"

Incorporated the language of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (PWDs) into Mongolian national laws governing transportation, education, and construction to benefit PWDs around the country.

SSN "Social Safety Net"

Promoted the social and economic inclusion of marginal groups to mitigate the effects on them of the global financial crisis and 2010 dzud disaster.

ICOGS "Improved Competitive Outsourcing of Government Services"

Strengthened the institutional framework of transparent and competitive public procurement through technical procurement capacity building for key budget holders, civil society engagement in the procurement process, and support to private entities to prepare tender documents and proposals.

APPEAL "Active Partnerships and Public Engagement for Accountable Localities"

Improved and diversified good governance practices in 15 aimags through citizen education and engagement, developing and enacting anti-corruption action plans with local government, and nation-wide campaigns to promote good governance and anti-corruption.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Mercy Corps Mongolia strengthened civil society and government institutions to adopt practices and policies that are transparent, responsive and inclusive of rural communities

Throughout all MCM programs strong partnership and alignment with government, civil society, and private sector stakeholders was critical to supporting the representation of rural communities' needs and establishing an enabling environment for sustainable economic development. MCM's good governance work seeks the development of civil society to strengthen open, transparent government systems and inclusive, responsive community engagement so that at every step community systems are being built, community voice is engaged through CSOs and brought into the higher level development plans for economic development and disaster risk reduction.

Through small grants, CSO training, and building networks that supported civil society actors to engage with rural communities and work with government agencies, strong partnerships between governments and CSOs led to meaningful engagement with community members resulting in improved governance practices.

MCM's good governance programming began during a critical turning point as Mongolia progressed significantly in its transformation from a centrally-planned state to a democratic, free market economy. Partnering with CSOs to improve their capacity to support social safety nets and engage citizens as observers helped strengthen social networks in rural areas and provided an intermediary between the public and government. This is evidenced in MCM's TAN and APPEAL programs supporting CSOs to engage citizens in anti-corruption, transparency, and planning; and in ICOGS and BRICS programs working with CSOs to engage the public in budget transparency, transparent tendering, and relationship building between the public and government agencies. Educating people and communities about governance is key to creating lasting change and adoption of new governance methodologies.

Mercy Corps believes governance is a process of decision-making and how those decisions are implemented. Good governance occurs when the existing systems and processes are transparent, accountable, just, responsive and participatory.

Legacy: CIVIL SOCIETY IS STRENGTHENED TO SUPPORT RURAL COMMUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH GOVERNMENT

Mercy Corps increased capacities of Civil Society Organizations through networking and skills building

In 2003, MCM began laying the groundwork to develop the capacity of rural civil society to build effective relationships with government bodies, to expand and improve their services to communities, and to form networks for strengthening their advocacy and outreach activities through the "Training, Advocacy and Networking Program for Stronger NGO Sector" (TAN) Program. TAN helped CSOs gain skills to develop stronger partnerships with the government and engage the community so that they can be better positioned as observers of the government and public funds. Through the TAN program:

- › MCM helped to form informal networks of CSOs in all five target aimags. Prior to TAN, CSOs did not know what other CSOs did or who they served. After the establishment of the CSO Network they were not only acquainted with each other but actively shared their experiences, joined advocacy efforts, and established best practices.
- › MCM established a cadre of local trainers to offer consultation services for CSO to work with government, businesses, and citizens. As a result, CSOs improved their organizational effectiveness to fundraise, advocate, and collaborate with the government as well as improved strategic

planning, organizational management, and responsive service delivery to their constituents.

Mercy Corps supported CSOs to develop linkages between communities and government that promoted accountability and openness

MCM contributed to the beginning of the professionalized civil society sector under the TAN program and continued to build upon this foundation in subsequent programs to strengthen linkages between civil society, government and local communities. Throughout MCM’s good governance programs, the common thread was the use of specific examples to demonstrate not only the benefits but also the practicalities of how local government systems can be made more transparent, accountable and responsive. This resulted in civil society actors’ improved capacity to work in partnership with local government and private businesses.

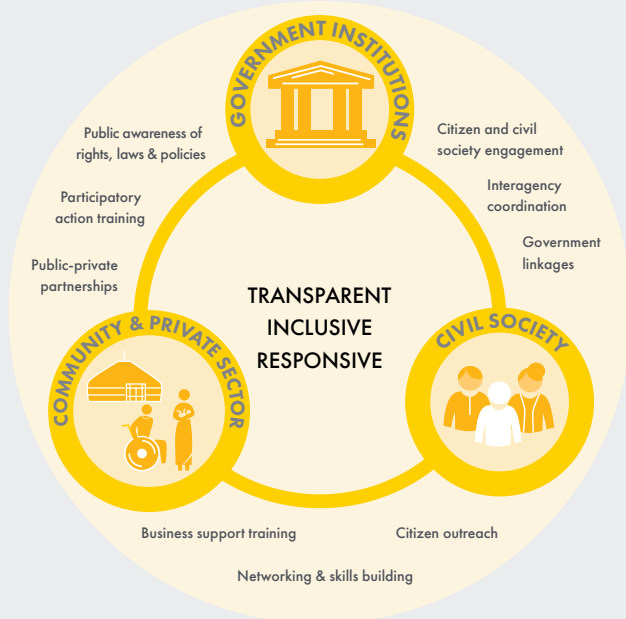
CSOs worked with government and engaged citizens to increase incomes of small businesses, ensure more efficient use of public money, and increase confidence of citizens to demand their rights by demonstrating practical civic engagement through sub-grants supported in part by MCM programs. Specifically, the BRICS projects demonstrated innovative approaches in promoting good governance and involving civil society, government, and the private sector in resolving priority local concerns.

› The BRICS program facilitated participatory action for oversight of the school lunch program budget. For the first time the public was engaged in conversations about the

Tripartite forum model facilitated the adoption of more transparent procurement practices

Through the TAN program, MCM successfully brought together citizen representatives with CSOs and governmental organizations through the establishment of tripartite forums - committees that included representatives of businesses and local khurals (parliaments) to serve as a watchdog over the government and public funds. MCM programs leveraged the tripartite forum model to develop sustainable economic development policy through open dialogue between citizens, private, and public sectors. This improved the business environment, strengthened partnerships between the government and business sector, and enhanced the skills of both government and business to operate with more transparency and accountability. Tripartite forums were a highly effective mechanism for collaboratively addressing issues and advocating on behalf of a number of civil society actors. The tripartite board model continued under BRICS I which supported the CSO Local Initiative to establish a tripartite committee to oversee the open procurement and tendering processes for Regional Diagnostic and Treatment Centre (RDTC) one of the country’s leading health institutions.

MERCY CORPS MONGOLIA’S GOOD GOVERNANCE WORK



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- › OPEN, TRANSPARENT & COMPETITIVE GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT
- › ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTION PLANS
- › SOCIAL SAFETY NETS
- › IMPROVED COMPETITIVE OUTSOURCING OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES
- › PWD ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS
- › SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES



Photo Credit: Thatcher Cook (2008)

The TAN program granted money to the CSO -Trade Union- to implement an unemployment reduction program. One example of the Trade Union's support was to a tailor, "Goyol" Fashion House.

M. Badankhamd, master seamstress in Tsetserleg soum of Arkhangai aimag

education budget regarding the school lunch budget and its implementation. This made the process more transparent and participatory, as well as led to improvements for higher quality lunches for school children. The project demonstrated the benefits of the open and transparent competition over the supply of publicly procured goods. Provisions were made to allow more companies to participate and compete for the contract to supply products for the School Lunch program.

- › Through BRICS an open and competitive procurement process was introduced to the GoM School Tea Break project. This competitive procurement process was introduced to other aimags through publications and a National Conference. Under this new competitive process, not only did businesses have the opportunity to supply their products, but they were also motivated to improve their manufacturing capacity to become a competitive supplier.

"We held a best practices forum, and the Ministry of Finance was involved. Later on we saw that the Ministry of Finance had changed their procurement practices to make them very transparent by creating an e-procurement web page. Since then they announce all tenders through this page, and they announce the winners of the tender on that page as well. So we have seen their practices have become much more transparent, and the practices of procurement in rural areas have also continued to be transparent"

- U. Mandal, MCM Civil Society Department Director (2005 -2011)

Legacy: MARGINALIZED GROUPS HAVE IMPROVED LINKAGES TO ADVOCATE FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mercy Corps worked with local and national government to support economic inclusion of marginalized people

Mongolia enjoyed rapid growth in 2001-2008. However, the global economic and financial crisis of 2008-2009 led to a dramatic reversal in Mongolia's fortunes with a fast growing trade deficit and steep exchange rate depreciation. Many herders and small rural businesses were bankrupted as commodity prices fell and formal credit became unattainable for all but the wealthiest. Compounding these problems was a drought in summer 2009 followed by severe winter dzud in 2009-2010. By May 2010, 8.2 million head of livestock (almost 26% of the national herd) had died. This was a significant loss of productive assets to the rural economy and had severe consequences for many families in rural Mongolia, 50% of whom are officially classified as poor. USAID provided emergency funding to Mongolia to address the global financial crisis and, in the context of the country, alleviate the most debilitating effects of the dzud.

Mercy Corps implemented the Social Safety Nets (SSN) project in ten rural aimags of Mongolia with the support of USAID. Rather than craft a project to address one or two of the inherent problems revealed through the twin crises, Mercy Corps Mongolia (MCM) developed a strategy to engage a varied and comprehensive set of stakeholders in an intensive, one-year program.

The key achievement of SSN was the creation, modeling, and transfer of activities that created social and economic inclusion of vulnerable individuals, and contributed directly to the broader community and economic growth in Mongolia's struggling rural aimag centers.

- › 4,075 individuals successfully graduated from the skills training and 2,041 of them secured permanent and seasonal jobs at local enterprises.
- › 3,056 Number of rural poor women who received local labor market specific skills training and 1,595 rural marginal men and women found permanent jobs and 362 started business enterprises.
- › SSN training was institutionalized within GoM through bilateral cooperation MoU with MoLSW, constant information sharing and consultative meetings with relevant authorities throughout the project, and "Social + economic inclusion" (specifically the PSS training) was adopted by GoM in 2012 as "Family Development Support" for Ulaanbaatar as well as aimag centers and rural soums.

Mercy Corps worked with the GoM to adopt inclusive policies for people with disabilities (PWDs)

Across Mongolia the primary challenge of people with disabilities (PWDs) is the inaccessibility of public services and information, including exclusion from education, health services, social networking, and other services. One of Mercy Corps most ambitious and far reaching advocacy efforts was to support the GoM adoption of the U.N. Resolution on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through the Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled project (FIELD). MCM, under BRICS II, worked to increase the impact of community based social welfare service provision for PWDs through working with the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and expanded this work under the FIELD program to bring legal, attitudinal and structural changes vital for the socio-economic inclusion of PWDs.

Despite existing legislation allowing PWDs access to education, employment, and social services, the mechanisms for enforcing the laws were very weak and the Mongolian Federation of Disabled People's Organizations (MFDPO), the Task Force that advocates for PWDs, was struggling to maintain its internal operations. MCM's work under FIELD I and II led to:

- › The approval of "Accessible Standards for Construction and Standards for Walkways for PWDs" policy by the Government of Mongolia. All infrastructure design is now required to take into account the needs of PWDs.
- › 670 government workers, private sector engineers, town planners, and policy-makers trained on the principles PWD Rights, concepts of accessibility, universal design, and government Standards on Accessibility.
- › A Task Force of Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs) established and empowered to take action for the fulfillment of the rights of PWDs.
- › 13,000 people benefited through standards for people with disabilities, capacity building and business opportunities of vulnerable populations, awareness raising.

Legacy: GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS ARE BETTER EQUIPPED TO SUPPORT PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY, DEMOCRATIC REFORMS, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mercy Corps enabled citizens and CSOs to improve accountability of local government anti-corruption plans

Opportunities stemming from Mongolia's emergence into the global free market also came with challenges of growing unemployment, income disparity, and social tensions that demanded the country develop an economic

development policy to support rural citizens. Building on the work started under the TAN program, MCM's APPEAL program strengthened the awareness and understanding of relevant legal frameworks related to anti-corruption and good governance as well as continued to support engaged, informed action in local communities.

- › APPEAL awarded 111 small grants to local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in 15 aimags to ensure that local organizations have the skills and experience to continue to promote good governance reaching 494,476 participants through 3,388 activities and events organized by a multi-stakeholder team of project implementing partners.
- › APPEAL worked through a facilitative approach with 126 Mongolian partner organizations including national level NGOs, government entities and 119 CSOs. APPEAL leveraged a population of experts who have shared knowledge of the laws and regulations pertaining to good governance and corruption and have a common set of tools to apply to improving government performance and eliminating corruption in both public and private life.
- › APPEAL engaged 29,224 citizens through 192 "Rules to Reality" Campaign events that increased citizen's understanding of good governance. Local participants had a better understanding of key governance laws, that they valued collaboration across sectors, that they were more likely to participate in local governance processes and that they felt an increased possibility in connecting to government organizations.

Mercy Corps supported the adoption of open, competitive, and transparent procurement government processes.

The lessons learned under the BRICS program to install open, transparent procurement systems were carried into the Market Opportunities for Rural Entrepreneurs (MORE) program to scale up partnership models, monitoring by civil society, and promote local procurement opportunities. MORE brokered further pragmatic improvements in public procurement and improved public sector performance, while at the same time increasing citizens' engagement and increasing demand for local goods and services. Government officers were equipped with skills and knowledge to administer procurement in an open and transparent way, civil society members were trained to work in tender evaluation committees or as independent observers and the private sector became more capable of preparing bid documents properly in response to government procurement announcements. Through its tripartite committees and the COGS Index performance evaluation, MORE empowered citizens to oversee government functions and model accountability systems that are applicable across public functions.

- › MORE developed the COGS Index to measure the openness, transparency, and competition of local

procurement bids. The project achieved 94% COGS Index score on all tenders (surpassing the target of 70%) resulting in improved openness and transparency of government procurement of goods and services and the process of contracting.

- › Under MORE, 952 local businesses submitted bids for government contracts, of which 564 were awarded resulting in 735 contracts with a total value of \$7 million USD.
- › Local businesses that participated in open and transparent government tenders created 429 new jobs in 12 target aimags through the resulting expansion of their business activities due to increased demand for local goods, works and services.

The ICOGS program continued the effort of BRICS and MORE to reinforce open, transparent procurement through public awareness campaigns and strengthening institutional frameworks through CSOs.

- › Under the ICOGS program, 969 people passed the A3 procurement certification training organized by MCM and then joined 378 Bid Evaluation Committees across 13 aimags.
- › The ICOGS program facilitated 200+ trainings in competitive tender procedures for 6,000+ people including certified Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC) members, media and CSOs to promote budget transparency and monitoring, procurement monitoring, and partnership between government and civil society.
- › 147,435 individuals participated in public awareness campaigns launched in 2013 and 2014, concerning budget transparency, participatory budgeting, and good governance aimed to build awareness of effective public procurement and focused on the benefits of open tendering and on the obligation of the government authorities to increase public support and oversight. Participants were from Local Procurement Units, Citizen Representative Hural, Governors' Offices, CSOs, local media, and civil society.

MCM improved procurement systems and promoted transparent and open governance through enhancing local CSO capacity, facilitating broad community engagement, and helping to increase government systems resulting in higher rates of local businesses winning tenders for government contracts.



Photo Credit: Mercy Corps FIELD

“We carried out an assessment on accessibility for people with disabilities for all new buildings and roads in 2011 under the FIELD II project. During that time we received a technical consultancy as part of the program, to develop the technical assessment methodology for infrastructure accessibility. The FIELD project enabled us to have a specialized team and a very comprehensive method to conduct technical assessments. In 2013, we established the National Wheelchair Users Association and opened branches at the aimag level. As of 2020, we have 7 branches and 5 of them include specialized research teams which conduct accessibility studies for people with disabilities.”

B. Chuluundolgor, Director of the National Wheelchair Users Association



Photo Credit: Sean Sheridan (2017)

The Legacy of the Mercy Corps Mongolia team

One of the most important legacies of Mercy Corps Mongolia is the close to 300 Mongolian and international team members who contributed to our success. Whether they were with Mercy Corps for a year or for decades, past MCM team members are proud of MCM's efforts to improve the lives and livelihoods of people in rural Mongolia. Mercy Corps truly thanks all our MCM team members and would like to pay a special tribute to Stephen D. Vance, the first Country Director for MCM and a visionary whose work in Mongolia paved the way for more than two decades of innovation and dedication to rural communities.

“We have many great interventions to facilitate positive change for people in rural Mongolia. Even after 10 years, when I meet with former MC (loan) clients, they still express their gratitude for changing their livelihoods and business practices.”

G. Gankhulug, Executive Director, Otgon Uuliin Elch LLC (MCM 2006-2012)

“All MC projects and programs impacted directly on the lives of Mongolians through increased economic opportunities, voice and participation in local development, access to social services for the most vulnerable.”

U. Mandal, Director of Civil Society Department (MCM 2005-2011)

“I am always proud to have worked in this international organization that had a huge impact on Mongolia's development. MC improved livelihoods of rural people, strengthened competitiveness of SMEs, improved partnership between government and CSOs.”

Kh. Turtogtokh, Senior Economist Undur Altain Zam LLC (MCM 2007-2014)

Sunsetting Mercy Corps Mongolia

Like many countries behind the Iron Curtain, Mongolia began the transition to democracy 30 years ago. It is now a middle-income country with strong economic indicators and prospects, a vibrant civil society, a thriving private sector, and an accountable, inclusive government.

Thus, in the second half of 2020, Mercy Corps International announced the difficult decision to sunset MC Mongolia after the end of the Resilient Communities Program in March 2021. This is a natural progression in development work: rural markets are thriving, Mongolian civil society is ready for large NGOs to step out of the way as their networks with community and government are both effective and transparent, and the government has created and will sustain an enabling environment to support environmentally responsible, dynamic, adaptable business growth.

For more than 20 years, Mercy Corps has partnered with the Government of Mongolia, local civil society organizations, and private sector actors to deliver impactful resilience-focused projects in the livestock, education, and governance sectors. Through these two decades, we have worked in partnership with government agencies from the village to the national level, tackled complex and interconnected issues, and worked to bring rural herder households and those that represent them closer together.

We are very proud of our legacy and of Mercy Corps Mongolia's work over the last two decades. We have delivered more than \$66,000,000 USD of assistance during this time, and have worked in almost every aimag in the country on more than 40 different projects. Our team has demonstrated commitment to and passion for our mission, and the agency is grateful for the work that more than 300 Mercy Corps Mongolia team members have done through the years.

Most of all, we are grateful for the partnerships we've forged through the years, and appreciate the chance to have worked with such dedicated private sector, civil society, and government partners from the bagh to the national level. Though we have decided to sunset our program, we continue to see Mongolia as a rising star.

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About Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within. Now, and for the future.



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