The Asia Foundation - Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities for 20 Years in Mongolia

IMPROVING LIVES, EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 20 YEARS IN MONGOLIA

1993 - 2013
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The Asia Foundation improves lives, expands opportunities, and helps societies flourish across a dynamic and developing Asia. We work with innovative leaders and communities to build effective institutions and advance pathbreaking reforms. Together with our partners, we are committed to Asia's continued development as a peaceful, just, and thriving region of the world.
It is a great pleasure and honor for me to write this foreword for this publication on the work of The Asia Foundation to improve lives and expand opportunities in Mongolia on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Foundation in Mongolia.

The Asia Foundation began funding and implementing programs in Mongolia in 1990, and established its resident office in Ulaanbaatar in 1993. At that time, the Foundation’s programming focused on forging strong relationships with individuals and nascent organizations, and supporting them in establishing the building blocks of a democratic Mongolia. The Foundation’s early programming sought to create opportunities and provide exposure for Mongolians to different approaches, models, and institutional arrangements in the U.S. and throughout Asia on topics such as the rule of law, judicial and parliamentary reform, independent media, civil society, and human rights. The Foundation also provided direct technical advice on the drafting of the 1992 Constitution, the NGO Law, the Law on Free Media, and the Domestic Violence Law, among other policies and statutes, and provided technical and financial assistance to the pioneers and leaders of Mongolian civil society.

Over the years, the Foundation, through its long-term, results-oriented approach to identifying and supporting key institutional and policy reforms, has worked with government and non-government partners on programs promoting and bolstering transparent, accountable, and participatory governance at the national and sub-national level; urban services improvement; judicial and legal reform; environmental protection and responsible resource use; economic policy reform and private sector development; civil society and civic engagement; women’s empowerment and security; international and regional cooperation; and educational support.

I have been fortunate to visit Mongolia many times since the mid-1990s, and have been able to meet in person many of the committed and inspiring Mongolian leaders and organizations that the Foundation has been privileged to work with. I would like to thank all our counterparts and partners over the last 20 years for their support and cooperation, and congratulate them on the tremendous achievements they have made in helping to drive Mongolia’s impressive development and democratization process as evidenced in this publication. Similarly, I would like to express my gratitude to our many public and private donors for their generous support of our programs in Mongolia, which have allowed us to grow, innovate, and expand in new areas - all in service to the Mongolian people and their aspirations for a brighter future for their country.

Going forward, the Foundation is committed to remaining a long-term partner in Mongolia’s development, and looks forward to continued close cooperation with Mongolia and its people!

Dr. Gordon Hein

Vice President, Programs
The Asia Foundation is celebrating its 20th anniversary since opening a representative office in Mongolia. Together with our many Mongolian partners, we are honored to look back at two decades of successful collaboration aimed at improving lives and expanding opportunities for all Mongolians.

This publication starts with a timeline that reflects some of the important milestones and highlights over the past twenty years. We have also presented selected results on the current range of projects we are implementing. As an organization, we seek to stay relevant, and want to ensure that our work is responsive to the emerging challenges and opportunities of Mongolia's dynamic development context.

In the four years that I have been in Mongolia, I have seen our program grow in size and develop into new and exciting areas as the range of partners we work with has expanded. Currently, we operate at both the national and sub-national levels, working with government, local authorities, academics, civil society, citizens, and the private sector. Our programs in governance provide timely information to the public on nationwide perceptions of corruption from citizens and business owners, support citizens to actively participate in local decision-making processes, and increase access to services for residents in ger areas of Ulaanbaatar. Our environment program works with communities affected by artisanal mining to mediate issues and concerns through multi-stakeholder councils, advances environmental awareness, and provides capacity-building on water quality monitoring, environmental rehabilitation, and responsible resource use. Programs to empower women provide support to the government to effectively implement anti-trafficking legislation, provide scholarships to young women studying in scientific fields, and enable vulnerable women to become entrepreneurs through small-scale farming.

It is a pleasure to work with so many dedicated, committed, and reform-minded actors and partners, whose innovative ideas and drive for results constitute a continuous source of inspiration for the implementation and development of our programs. Critical for the Foundation to be able to carry out its work are the trust, support, and partnership of the various donors that are funding our programs. I would like to thank all our past and present donors for their continuous support over the last 20 years. Despite Mongolia's impressive development, it is crucial that we continue to join our efforts in working on the most critical issues affecting people's lives.

The work that The Asia Foundation has been able to carry out over the last two decades can be attributed to the invaluable contributions made by the many committed and professional colleagues who have worked with the Foundation since the office was opened. I feel extremely privileged to be able to lead The Asia Foundation's programs at this time, together with a team of dedicated and committed staff and all our partners, and I look forward to a continued fruitful collaboration.

Meloney C. Lindberg
In the early years of Mongolia’s transition from socialism to democracy, central to The Asia Foundation’s programming goal in the 1990s was creating opportunities and exposure for Mongolians to various approaches and models; policies and implementing procedures; and new institutional arrangements. The early visiting fellows programs sponsored by the Foundation were critically important in providing Mongolians with an opportunity to see beyond their experiences in the former Soviet system and gain access to legal, constitutional and electoral information, new and modern economic theories, and democratic ideas and practices. The Foundation also contributed significantly to the development of civil society in Mongolia. The Foundation nurtured the growing democratic movement by funding a wide range of women’s non-governmental organizations (NGOs), environmental groups, journalists, and others. Books for Asia was another tangible contribution from The Asia Foundation to the Mongolian people since the very beginning of the partnership.

In the latter half of the 1990s, the Foundation deepened its relationships with government institutions and non-government organizations, with a special focus on supporting those NGOs working to improve and protect the economic, political, and social rights and opportunities for Mongolian women.

In the early part of the 2000s, the Foundation helped facilitate the vital and challenging task of consolidating the structural reforms of the democratic transformation, and encouraged and facilitated important programs on Mongolia’s international relations and security.

In the late 2000s, the most critical challenges facing the Mongolians were to improve governing institutions at national and local levels and to establish conditions for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. To promote good governance, the Foundation supported the passage of the Anti-Corruption Law and the establishment of the Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC). In addition, we implemented an anti-trafficking in persons program to assist Mongolia’s compliance with international protocols against human trafficking, and contributed to an increase in the number of prosecutions and convictions in trafficking cases. As development of Mongolia’s mineral wealth advanced, the Foundation filled the niche of promoting responsible mining using a multi-stakeholder approach.

In the last two decades, Mongolia has experienced rapid political, economic, and social transformation, from a Soviet client state to a democracy and market economy. With twenty years of programming experience with Mongolian partners, the Foundation will continue to support Mongolia to meet these challenges, with programs to advance good governance, promote citizen participation, improve urban services in the ger areas, address environmental challenges, empower women, and promote dialogue on regional cooperation.
1989  In December 1989, the Mongolian Mission to the United States and the United Nations sends a letter to The Asia Foundation’s headquarters in San Francisco, requesting the Foundation’s help in its transition from socialism to democracy.

1990  Dr. Sheldon R. Severinghaus, a longtime Foundation senior staffer, arrives in Ulaanbaatar in January.

   From January to April, the Foundation supports the first-ever delegation of Mongolian parliamentarians to visit the United States to observe the Congress and other institutions. The Foundation funds an American team of legal specialists who travel to Mongolia to lecture and lead seminars on constitutional law and human rights.

   The Foundation hosts a lunch in Washington, D.C., for the Mongolian People’s Republic’s first Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Ganbold Davaadorj, and presents him with a collection from the Books for Asia Program.

   In September, the Foundation is invited to pay its first formal visit to Mongolia. It is one of the first international NGOs to be invited into Mongolia to assist in the country’s transition and development.

1991  The Foundation provides support for the drafting of the new 1992 constitution, including a study tour for six representatives of the Mongolian Parliament (two are members of the Constitutional Commission) to the United States to observe the Congress and other institutions in February. Following the tour, the Foundation supports a visit of two American specialists in constitutional law to Mongolia to lecture and lead seminars on constitutional law and human rights.

1992  The Foundation supports activities for legal education and building of the legal system in Mongolia, including support for the drafting of the Law on Courts.

1993  In June, the Honorable Jatsrai Punsag, Prime Minister of Mongolia, visits The Asia Foundation headquarters in San Francisco during his trip to the United States.

   In October, The Asia Foundation opens a representative office in Ulaanbaatar.

1994  The Foundation supports civil society participation in public affairs through the development of the NGO Law. In the spring of 1994, the Foundation sends three media law consultants, with extensive experience both in the United States and Europe, to Mongolia to join a working group of Mongolian counterparts in the drafting of the Law on Free Media.
1995  The Foundation supports women's participation in civic issues with a series of grants made to women's NGOs including Women for Social Progress (WSP) and the Liberal Women's Brain Pool (LEOS).

Sai Khanbileg Ch., head of the Democratic Youth Movement, participates in the Foundation's voter education study tour prior to the 1996 parliamentary elections.

The Foundation supports Mongolian participation in the Fourth World Conference in Women in Beijing, followed by a symposium in Ulaanbaatar.


On June 30, the Foundation organizes a bipartisan American delegation headed by former Secretary of State James E. Baker III to observe Mongolia's parliamentary elections with Senator Chuck Robb.

In the 1996 Parliament, the number of women parliamentarians jumps from three to seven. Six have been beneficiaries of Foundation grants.

1997  On January 31, the Parliament passes Mongolia's first Law on NGOs, representing the successful culmination of sustained Foundation support over three years (1994 - 1997).

For the first time, Mongolians obtain permanent access to nongovernmental and nonpartisan information about the government through the new Voter Education Center (VEC), established with support from the Foundation.

1998  To assist Mongolians in revising the 25-year-old Family Law, The Asia Foundation provides support to the Parliament Secretariat for the Legal Affairs Standing Committee to convene a seminar on proposed amendments drafted with the active involvement of a wide-range of non-governmental organizations.

1999  The Foundation assists the National Center Against Violence (NCAV) and the Mongolian Women Lawyers' Association (MWLA) to refine the draft domestic violence law and to mobilize support for the new legislation.

With Asia Foundation support, the Political Education Academy provides opportunities for a multidisciplinary research team to study the constitution, its organic laws, and the impact of these laws on different branches of government.

The Foundation supports the Ministry of External Relations to establish the Mongolian National Committee on Pacific Economic Cooperation (MONCPEC), and assists MONCPEC for a meeting on Mongolia's economic forecast and a conference on Mongolia's integration into the Asia-Pacific for the business community.

The Foundation, in partnership with the Mongolian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), produces the first survey of the business community on corruption.
2000  The Asia Foundation supports traditional conflict resolution of pasture land disputes with research and consultancy, and supports the publication of a handbook by the Center for Human Rights and Development (CHRD) on conflict resolution approaches for land disputes.

From September 11 to 13, the Foundation organizes Mongolia’s Political and Economic Transition: Challenges and Opportunities, a conference in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Foundation’s initial programming in Mongolia.

2001  The Foundation launches a groundbreaking local government budget transparency initiative in partnership with the Uvurhangai aimag (province) branch of Women for Social Progress. Women for Social Progress conducts local government budget research programs in five aimags, organizes a national workshop, and implements research on provincial legislatures’ policies for accountability and transparency.

2002  To support legal reform in Mongolia, The Asia Foundation provides assistance to the Mongolian Human Rights NGO Forum held in Ulaanbaatar.

The Foundation supports the Institute of Strategic Studies to organize a Multilateral Security Dialogue, Eighth Plenary Meeting of the Expanded Senior Panel: Limited Nuclear Weapons Free Zone for Northeast Asia, held in Ulaanbaatar.

2003  The Foundation, together with the CHRD, creates a pioneering legal framework analysis and situational survey on trafficking in persons in Mongolia.

2004  The Foundation works with leaders in local government, business, media, and NGOs to identify and address the most pressing legal and regulatory obstacles to local small and medium enterprises.

On June 20, Mongolian President Natsagiin Bagabandi gives a lecture entitled “Northeast Asia and Mongolia are Through the Democracy” for the 50th anniversary of the Foundation in its San Francisco headquarters during his 2004 official visit to the United States.


2006  Pivotal to anti-corruption reform, the Foundation advises on and advocates for passage of the Anti-Corruption Law in 2006, which creates the Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC) to lead the fight against corruption. The Foundation works with the IAAC to set up a Corruption Reporting Hotline, and to introduce income and asset disclosure forms for public officials. The Foundation in partnership with the Sant Maral Foundation also develops a semi-annual, national survey tool for benchmarking household perceptions and experience of corruption.

2007  The Asia Foundation launches Securing Our Future, a multi-stakeholder program bringing together government, the private sector, and NGO representatives to promote responsible mining that protects human and environmental health.

A massive public awareness campaign, organized by The Asia Foundation, brings 100,000 people together on Ulaanbaatar’s central square for the country’s first anti-human trafficking concert.
2008  The Foundation's advocacy for increased governmental engagement directly results in a January 2008 prime ministerial decree to combat corruption. This decree drives a process that includes increased inter-agency cooperation to combat corruption and the preparation and implementation of anti-corruption action plans for each ministry and agency head, which are now the cornerstones of the Government’s corruption prevention efforts.

The Foundation, through its Books for Asia program, distributes 100,000 books to all aimags (provinces), and partners with the Khaan Bank to distribute 15,000 books to children's centers in three aimags.

2009  In an effort to promote a more credible electoral process in future elections, the Foundation works to develop a set of concrete recommendations for the General Election Committee (GEC) and policymakers through a voter registration assessment and voter education survey.

The President of Mongolia opens the first citizen's hall at the Government House to enable citizens to participate in public discussions and consultations on draft laws and policies. Modest funding support is provided by The Asia Foundation.

2010  The Asia Foundation, in partnership with the Shirin Pandju Merali Foundation, establishes a scholarship program for 60 aspiring young women to pursue four-year science degrees at two of Mongolia’s top universities.

Building on its Securing Our Future program, the Foundation starts implementation of the three-year Engaging Stakeholders in Environmental Conservation program, aimed at establishing responsible use of water and soil resources through multi-stakeholder engagement.

2011  The Foundation and its partners in Mongolia work with coalitions of NGOs and lawmakers to draft a stand alone law combating trafficking in persons, and advocate for its passage in Parliament.

On June 13, the Foundation hosts a private dinner at The Four Seasons in San Francisco for His Excellency the President of Mongolia, Elbegdorj Tsakhia.

2012  On January 19, the Law on Preventing Conflict of Interest in the Public Sector and the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons are adopted as a result of advocacy by various Mongolian civil society organizations, and with the support of the Foundation.

On May 28, the Foundation’s Board of Trustees visits Mongolia and meets with a wide variety of Mongolian leaders including President Elbegdorj Tsakhia, as part of its spring meetings.

The Foundation, together with the Zorig Foundation and MonAme Scientific Research Centre, supports the Mongolian Presidency of the Community of Democracies to organize the International Women’s Leadership Forum, with keynote speaker Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton.
2013 On February 6, the STAGE program launches the first Study of Private Perceptions of Corruption (STOPP) survey, designed to obtain a picture of the extent of corruption, based on the experiences of members of the business community. Interviewing representatives of small, medium, and large business enterprises, this study captures the similarities and differences in corrupt practices that companies face, breaking down the findings by sector.

The Mongolian Parliamentarians Against Corruption, a chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians, is reestablished following a study visit to the Philippines, organized by the Foundation, to attend the Global Conference of Parliamentarians Against Corruption.

From April 28 to 29, the Foundation supports the organization of the Parliamentary Forum and the Women’s Forum at the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies.

Oct 1, 2013 20th Anniversary of The Asia Foundation in Mongolia
ADVANCING RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES

“For hundreds, if not thousands of years, Mongolians lived as nomadic herders and learned how to live in harmony with nature, and because they were directly dependent on this nature to survive, they learned how to protect it.” - Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Minister for Environment and Green Development

Mongolia sits on some of the world’s largest mineral deposits, and while these abundant resources have placed Mongolia among Asia’s top economic performers, that rapid growth has brought with it serious concerns over the environmental impact of the country’s booming mining industry.
With tougher regulation, large mining companies have begun to adopt more responsible practices, including environmental reclamation efforts. At the same time, however, the loss of traditional livelihoods in rural areas has led to the growth of small-scale mining. These artisanal miners typically lack the knowledge and resources to protect the environment, and widespread environmental degradation has led to growing antagonism between miners and local residents.

Since 2006, The Asia Foundation has been promoting responsible mining in Mongolia to ensure that all Mongolians benefit from the growth of the mining sector. In the first effort of its kind, the Foundation collaborated with NGOs, government, and the mining industry to formulate responsible mining principles and to establish the Responsible Mining Initiative (RMI), a national, multi-stakeholder council that has developed a responsible mining index to distinguish responsible mining companies from irresponsible mining companies.

Ms. Bayarmaa, Executive Director of the RMI, says: “The responsible mining index that RMI has developed is distributed to all mining companies with the request to do a self-assessment. Over the years, we
have seen positive environmental policy changes with many members of Parliament and high-level public officials talking about protecting the environment, promoting green development, and building a green economy. All stakeholders - government, mining companies, and citizens - are well aware of the importance of responsible mining today.”

Building on this national initiative, the Foundation, through its Engaging Stakeholders in Environmental Conservation (ESEC) program, which started in August 2010, has been collaborating with local officials and NGOs in 31 soums to establish local, multi-stakeholder councils (LMCs) that include artisanal miners, to promote responsible resource use and environmental conservation, and to discuss concerns and solutions going forward.

One successful example can be found in Lam Tolgoi, a former mining hot spot in Uyanga soum in Uvurkhangai aimag with an estimated 30,000 artisanal miners at its peak. Large areas of land were pockmarked with holes after being abandoned by artisanal miners. In collaboration with a local NGO, Environmental Conservation and Local Development (ECLD), a model land reclamation project was launched on two hectares of abandoned artisanal mine sites. ECLD worked with 45 artisanal miners to fill 3,100 holes and has brought in 150 cubic meters of fertile topsoil and planted three species of perennial plants.

In 2012, following the successful reclamation project, a 25-member LMC was established in Uyanga soum. “When citizens see degraded land, they come to me requesting to reclaim the land as a top priority,” says Mr. Sodnombaljir Dondov, Chair of Bag Citizen’s Khural of Uyanga soum. Before the LMC, there was nowhere for those voices to be heard. “Now,” he says, “in the LMC meeting, they can tell their concerns and find solutions. We now have a bridge between local residents and officials; local communities bring their voices up from the bottom.”

Although the reclaimed site is relatively small, the project has created tremendous local enthusiasm, and the soum governor has called it a model for mine reclamation. At his insistence, mining companies within the jurisdiction now must tour the site before beginning their own operations. ECLD must certify that the mining company has seen and understood the requirements of mine reclamation before permission is granted to mine in Uyanga soum.

“Two years ago there was a lot of conflict - even gunshots sometimes - between residents and miners,” says Mr. Dorj Gombogiv, Executive Director of ECLD. “Now the artisanal miners and mining companies are changing their approach to rehabilitating the land.”

Many changes are happening, and local citizens are increasingly interested in participating. “LMC members are working hard on every aspect of development, not just mining. Now mining companies are employing more local residents, and they are buying products directly from local shops as a result of the feedback from the LMC. This is a big incentive for soums to have LMCs,” says Mr. Dorj. Within the framework of the recently passed budget law, which allows funding for community-initiated projects, motivation of local citizens to participate in decision-making is increasing rapidly. “This land is where we were born and raised,” Mr. Dorj adds. “It’s where our children will grow up, so it’s important to keep the landscape as natural as possible. All our grandmothers and grandfathers are watching from the sky, so we must reclaim the land to make it again a pristine valley.”

The Foundation is continuing its efforts to promote responsible resource use and environmental conservation through multi-
stakeholder engagement through a second phase of the successful ESEC I program, which ended in July 2013 and was funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Foundation. The ESEC II project started in August 2013 and focuses on promoting environmentally responsible artisanal mining working closely together with SDC's Sustainable Artisanal Mining (SAM) project. The ESEC II project will be implemented over the course of three and a half years until December 2016 and is co-funded by SDC and The Asia Foundation.
In July 2013, Mongolia concluded its successful, two-year presidency of the Community of Democracies, an international organization of democratic governments and civil society groups that works to support emerging democracies and strengthen civil society worldwide. It was a fitting honor for the nation, which many consider an international model of peaceful transition to democratic rule. During its tenure, Mongolia focused on promoting education for democracy, strengthening regional cooperation, fostering collaboration with civil society, advancing women’s empowerment, and countering corruption, while successfully pushing for reforms to make the organization more operational and action-oriented.

The Asia Foundation supported Mongolia’s presidency through the Supporting Mongolia’s Presidency of the Community of Democracies project from July 2011 to July 2013 with the generous support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S.
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DHRL), and the Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy in Mongolia. In 2012, together with the Zorig Foundation and MonAme Scientific Research Center, the Foundation worked with the presidency to help organize the International Women's Leadership Forum. The forum brought together over 100 participants, including former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, to discuss ways to promote women's entrepreneurship, access to natural resources, and leadership in the private sector.

This year, with the generous support of its US donors, the Foundation helped organize both the Women's Forum and the Parliamentary Forum for the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, held in Ulaanbaatar. This year’s Women’s Forum, entitled Strengthening Women, Strengthening Democracy, focused on the challenges women face in achieving political representation at both the national and local levels, challenges still common in many of the countries represented, including Mongolia. Due in part to the introduction of proportional representation in Mongolia’s 2012 parliamentary elections, women have made progress in Parliament, but men still outnumber women in Mongolian politics, and it was clear from discussions during the forum that much remains to be done, especially in the countryside. With the support of USAID and The Asia Foundation, 26 women representatives from rural Mongolian organizations were able to participate in the forum. “The support for participants from women’s civil society organizations in the countryside was important for transparency purposes, and provided them with an opportunity to raise awareness in their communities,” said Ms. Bolormaa Mashlai, Secretary-General and Head of the Secretariat of the National Committee on Gender Equality, one of the main organizers of the Women’s Forum.

Under the theme “Parliamentarians Against Corruption,” The Parliamentary Forum focused this year on the debilitating effects of corruption, which remains a complex issue in Mongolia. “The Parliamentary Forum signaled Mongolia’s commitment to zero tolerance for corruption, and gave parliamentarians from around the world an important platform to share their experiences and to learn from Mongolia’s lessons in return,” says MP Batchimeg Migeddorj, who organized the Parliamentary Forum.

As it now hands over the presidency to El Salvador, Mongolia can look back on a successful two years. Mongolia gave new impetus to the Community of Democracies, and made significant progress in the priority areas of its presidency, in particular by initiating the drafting of the Resolution on Education for Democracy, which was eventually adopted by all 193 members of the UN General Assembly. “Our chairmanship has given us a very good opportunity to assess where we are,” says Ambassador-at-Large Suren Badral. “The whole of Mongolia has realized that we are in good shape, on the right track.”
PARTNERING FOR TRANSPARENCY:
WORKING TOGETHER TO CURB CORRUPTION IN MONGOLIA
“We need to push the implementation of laws like the Freedom of Information Law, the Anti-Corruption Law, and the Anti-Money Laundering Law to be more effective, and we also need to work on reform of other laws to implement the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.” - MP Burmaa Radnaa, Head of the Mongolian Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption

It takes more than one well-intentioned law to root out corruption when it has taken hold in a society. It requires a coordinated strategy of legislation, enforcement, and perhaps most importantly of all, the active engagement of civil society.

The Asia Foundation has supported the Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC) since it was established by the Anti-Corruption Law in 2006, and opinion polls have repeatedly shown that the Mongolian public supports the IAAC as the leading agency in the fight against corruption. But the IAAC cannot do it alone; it needs support from other actors. Since 2007, investigators from the IAAC have been working to forge interagency partnerships with prosecutors and judges; but more engagement was needed from civil society. In the last three years, new legislation on conflict of interest and freedom of information have, for the first time, opened the door for the IAAC to form constructive partnerships with civil society organizations.

In April 2013, The Asia Foundation’s USAID-funded Strengthening Transparency and Governance program (STAGE), joined with the IAAC to launch the Partnership on Transparency Initiative (PTI), a loose network of civil society organizations, now 18 in number, working to spread the word about these important new laws. Using a conflict of interest curriculum developed by the IAAC and Women for Social Progress, PTI partners have trained more than 1,500 citizens, civil servants, citizens’ representatives and businesses on the ins and outs of the new laws. In addition to traditional training workshops, one PTI member, The Zorig Foundation, organized a Facebook meme competition on the topic of conflict of interest to spread information quickly on the Internet. The three week long competition drew 60 submissions; 310,229 views; 10,629 likes; and 1,225 shares. “There have been attempts to get people to learn about governance, but I think a lot of it has been done in a traditional way,” says Badruun G., Executive Director of the Zorig Foundation. “It’s important to help people realize that ‘governance’ is not just an abstract thing - it actually has an effect on their lives.”

PTI partner organizations are increasingly trying non-traditional approaches to raising awareness. One highlight is a stage drama called SOCHI, an abbreviation of Sonirkholyn Zurchul, which means “conflict of interest” in Mongolian. Performed as Readers Theater, SOCHI was staged and broadcast throughout the country. The IAAC and the Tengerleg Aviyas NGO, with support from The Asia Foundation, are in the last stages of developing a television drama entitled Cost, which examines the consequences of corruption for an ordinary Mongolian family. The Foundation and the IAAC hope that Cost will debut before International Anti-Corruption Day, December 9, and be carried by all community television stations in Mongolia. And in another intriguing initiative, led by the Globe International Center, a team of professional script-writers, investigators and marketers is nearing completion on Khangai, a 20 episode television drama that begins airing in 2014 on the NTV Channel. It is hoped that Khangai will not just raise awareness of corruption, but stimulate public discussion and a search for solutions.

Underpinning the Foundation’s work on corruption is a pair of benchmarking surveys that periodically capture the public’s evolving perception of corruption in Mongolia. The Survey on Perceptions and Knowledge of Corruption (SPEAK), and the Study of Private Perceptions of Corruption (STOPP) are each conducted semi-annually by The Asia Foundation and its partner, the Sant Maral Foundation.

The SPEAK survey is a nationwide poll that shows trends in the perception and incidence of corruption. SPEAK is an important tool to measure what is working and what still needs attention, so that STAGE can develop programs to support remediation of corruption-
prone agencies. The STOPP survey focuses on the private sector to better understand how corruption is affecting businesses. A notable finding from this survey has been the lack of specific policies among private sector businesses to support ethical business practices and zero-tolerance for corruption. The Business Council of Mongolia and the Mongolian Employers’ Federation are now preparing seminars for business leaders to highlight the importance of specific policies and codes of conduct in combating corruption. The Mongolian Employers’ Federation will work closely with selected businesses to develop anti-corruption action plans and support their effective implementation.

Of course, lawmakers too have an important role to play in the fight against corruption. The new parliament in June 2012 was an opportunity to re-establish the Mongolian Parliamentarians Against Corruption, or MONPAC. MONPAC is the Mongolian chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), a worldwide alliance of parliamentarians working together to combat corruption, strengthen good government, and uphold the rule of law. MONPAC comprises 16 members of Parliament representing all political parties. MP Uyanga G. participated in the GOPAC annual conference in Manila in February 2013. “We were able to make plans as the GOPAC Conference was happening in Manila,” she says. “We agreed that we need to address political party financing, and that there must be awareness to change the public’s attitude towards corruption. I believe the notable results from the conference were that it motivated us to create an action plan and establish a secretariat for MONPAC as soon as we returned.”
INCREASING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

“In the last 23 years, Mongolia has become an electoral democracy, but the journey of democracy has not ended. The people have to be in power, and key decisions have to be decided by citizens, not by politicians.” —Mr. Tsagaan Puntsag, Chief of Staff, Office of the President

Mongolia’s transition from a one-party state under the control of Soviet Russia to a vibrant, functioning democracy in a little over 20 years has made it a poster-child in the region. In 1992, the government adopted a constitution that included a decentralized system of self-governance. However, as a new democracy, ensuring that citizens’ voices are heard in decision making at the national and local level remains a challenge.
In 2009, Mongolia’s president opened the first-ever citizens’ hall in the Government House under the Office of the President, where citizens can come to voice their opinions on draft bills, and can participate in the decision-making process. Capitalizing on this momentum, The Asia Foundation, through the Fostering Civic Engagement at the Subnational Level (FOCE) project, has been working in partnership with the Office of the President of Mongolia since September 2012 to promote urban and rural governments that are democratic, empowered, and accountable to citizens. The focus of the SDC-funded project is civic education on decentralization laws, participatory decision-making, holding public officials accountable, and enhancing citizens’ ability to participate at the subnational level.

The project’s progress is already evident in Zuunmod soum, located 50 kilometers outside of Ulaanbaatar, where a newly elected soum government, for the first time in 20 years, is working with citizens through a citizens’ hall to ensure that the local development fund is spent based on their local priorities.

“The wave of change in civic participation is already ongoing, we just need to ride it, and make the wave bigger,” says Mr. Erdenebaatar, the Deputy Governor of Zuunmod soum. “Many people now believe that citizens’ participation is key to driving the economy. I’m glad to see this mentality in Zuunmod soum.”

In February 2013, the first fully equipped citizens’ hall was opened in Tuv, the aimag center of Zuunmod soum, fully financed and supported by the local government, with a capacity to receive 30-40 citizens at one time. The citizens’ hall has four full-time staff, and state-of-the-art facilities to provide citizens with timely information. Touch screen computers line the walls of the hall, giving citizens access to job postings, construction projects, current vegetable prices, and more. Colorful posters notify locals about specific plans for a new soum international airport and new apartment projects. One area of the hall features an educational exhibit about farming and local produce - Tuv aimag supplies 70-80 percent of the country’s fresh produce. Since its opening, 13 discussions have been conducted with over 287 soum citizens involved.

As part of one recent training on advocacy skills, 24 local residents gathered to discuss the most critical issues in their communities, ranging from poor garbage collection and troubling alcoholism, to youth unemployment and lack of access to information. After a lively discussion, participants prepared a list of their issues to present to the soum government.

“Before, we never raised our opinions about issues in our lives, and did not know how to raise our voices,” said one participant from Sergelen soum. “Now for the first time, through the citizens’ hall, we can go back to our homes and know that our priorities will be heard, and the issue will be solved.”

Based on feedback from the citizens, the local government has embarked on several redevelopment projects, including the renovation of several crumbling apartment blocks in the aimag that have been public eyesores for 20 years. New sidewalks connecting the residents to city services have been constructed, and local residents have been employed to do the work. Plans for a new ger community are underway. In June, the citizens’ hall organized a live public discussion program with Tuv aimag’s only television station, TBS TV, called “Open Parliament,” which provides information on how money is being spent and serves as a bridge between citizens and public services.

Following the success of the program in its six pilot sites, the Foundation has expanded the FOCE program to 10 more areas across Mongolia.
Mongolia is now one of the world’s fastest growing economies, and nowhere is this growth more evident than the bustling and energetic capital, Ulaanbaatar. Expensive high rises, luxury stores, and modern apartment buildings are common sights in this city of 1.5 million; tower cranes dot the rising skyline, harbingers of even more cutting-edge development projects to come. But in the shadows of the cranes and high rises, are the city’s ger districts, where more than half of the capital’s residents live without access to even basic public services like water and sewage systems and central heating.

In 1989, 26.8 percent of Mongolia’s population lived in Ulaanbaatar; by 2006 that number had risen to 38.1 percent; and by the 2010 census, 45 percent of Mongolia’s population lived in the capital. Looking forward, population growth in the capital is expected to continue at the same pace. This influx is fueled by a steady stream of migrants that have left harsh conditions in the countryside to seek better access to jobs, services, and education in the cities. Ulaanbaatar has absorbed by far the largest numbers of these migrants, and with little affordable housing available, most of the newcomers ultimately settle in the ger areas.

Dealing with the ramifications of such large settlements in unplanned locations, and effectively delivering services to all the city’s residents, particularly in Mongolia’s extreme weather conditions, is a massive challenge. Given the fluid nature of the areas, and the very limited data on demographics and availability of services for the neighborhoods, or khorooos, citizens’ participation in decision-making and planning has been limited.

Since May 2012, as part of a project to improve urban services in the ger districts, The Asia Foundation has been supporting the city municipality at the community level to engage ger area residents more actively in governance, and at the policy level to plan more effective and efficient public investment in ger area services. Understanding the demographics of the areas, and where services are in relation to where people live, is essential to making informed decisions about how to redevelop these areas, but until now, the city lacked the tools to gather, organize, and analyze up-to-date information at the khoroo level.

To fill this gap, the Foundation began a community-mapping project that engages local leaders and citizens in gathering information about service delivery and public resources in their communities. The data collected is then used to produce local area maps that can be used both by citizens and city officials. The mapping process itself is designed to activate local citizens and leaders to engage in discussions of the availability of public services in their communities, and to form clear ideas for the prioritization of resources and investment by the city and the community members themselves. It is also designed to provide city officials with a source of clear and easy-to-understand data on public services that can be regularly and rapidly collected.

After presenting analysis from the initial pilot in 11 khorooos, the Foundation is now partnering with the city to map the remaining 76 ger area khorooos, so that the data can be used in discussing the city’s five-year investment plan, as well as the parliamentary budget sessions for 2014. It will be the first time that spatial analysis is used as a basis for the political level budgetary discussions.
At a recent community mapping session, local leaders of Bayanzurkh district, khoroo 27, one of the biggest khorooos within Bayanzurkh district, with a population of 15,000, leaned over a draft map, intently discussing the nuances of the community. “Here is the hilliest area, with a high risk of flooding. During winter time, trash trucks will not be able to climb the icy roads there,” one woman, a social worker, pointed out. Another identified the khoroo’s sole kindergarten: according to data collected by the leaders of this project, about 60 percent of the children between two to five years old do not have access to a kindergarten.

“Community mapping is useful, not just for city leaders, but for community members. It serves as a tool to discuss needs, with detailed information in a simple, easy-to-understand format. Even our elders living here can understand,” said one local leader.

In a matter of months, residents of khoroo 27 will start using the initial data to tackle one of the ger area’s most stubborn and urgent needs: illegal garbage dumping. More detailed data on where these sites are in relation to the population distribution and garbage needs of the area will enable city planners to make informed decisions based on where changes are needed in the existing garbage collection services.

Following the completion of this initial round of data collection, the Foundation’s Urban Services for the Ger Districts project will support the city to make community mapping a sustainable tool. This will involve training, and planning for regular updates of the information, and the creation of an interactive website to show the data, carry out analysis for city officials, and share information openly with Ulaanbaatar citizens. The three year project, funded under an institutional partnership between The Asia Foundation and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), combines both support for community-level engagement and innovation as well as for strategic planning and policy-making by the Ulaanbaatar city municipality to improve the quality of services and promote inclusive urban governance.
PREVENTING LABOR AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
Mongolia is no stranger to the scourge of human trafficking, the commercial trade in humans for sexual exploitation or forced labor. Mongolia is now recognized as both a source country and a destination for victims of human trafficking, which affects men, women and children. Yet very few cases are reported, tried, or lead to convictions.

“Every month, we get 20 calls from people seeking information or counseling, or reporting potential cases of trafficking,” says Mrs. Ganbayasgakh Geleg, head of the Gender Equality Center (GEC) in Ulaanbaatar, and recipient of the Hero Acting to End Modern-Day Slavery Award from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2010.

The Asia Foundation has been working with the Gender Equality Center since 2002, when human trafficking in Mongolia was not widely acknowledged. Together they have studied the incidence of trafficking; provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice on key legislation and international anti-trafficking accords; built the capacity of law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges, resulting in more trafficking convictions; and educated an estimated 100,000 youths about trafficking, through multimedia and awareness-raising campaigns. The GEC also provides survivors of trafficking with information and counseling services.

In 2006, the GEC established a nationwide, 24-hour hotline, Hotline 1903, as a life-saving resource for victims of trafficking and a place where the public can report suspected cases to the law enforcement agencies. To date, the hotline has received over 5,600 calls - 138 from trafficking victims - and nearly 1,600 people have called for information on safe migration, labor placement agencies, study abroad agencies, and marriage mediation. For the last three years, with generous support from the MYTWo Fund via Give2Asia, The Asia Foundation has helped the GEC keep this vital resource operational and professionalize its services.

In January 2012, Parliament adopted the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons (Anti-TIP), a milestone in Mongolia’s anti-trafficking efforts, and the culmination of more than three years of intense advocacy by the Human Security Policy Studies Center and other stakeholders. In 2010, The Asia Foundation began working with the Mongolian Women Lawyers’ Association to advocate for passage of the law, collecting signatures in all 21 provinces, developing educational fact sheets for MPs with the latest statistics on trafficking in Mongolia, and reaching out to decision-makers regarding the significance of the proposed legislation.
The Foundation currently provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Justice on national counter-trafficking initiatives. In particular, the Foundation with funding of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs will support the work of the National Sub-Council on Combating Trafficking in Persons, as it develops a strategy to implement the new Anti-TIP law and revise the existing national program. The project will also build the capacity of Sub-Council members and related agencies to address trafficking issues, facilitate coordination between government and other agencies, and create an inter-governmental database to improve access to trafficking information. To support the Ministry of Justice work, the Foundation is also setting up a legal defense fund with our own resources for victims of trafficking, which will eventually become an official fund managed by the Ministry.
Mongolia has a growing demand for educated young professionals in engineering, construction, and information technology. But poverty is still a daunting barrier to higher education for many young Mongolians, and women especially are underrepresented in these fields. Since 2010, the Shirin Pandju Merali Foundation Scholarship Program for Mongolian Women (Merali Scholarship Program) has enabled 120 academically promising young women from the countryside and Ulaanbaatar City to pursue degrees in science and technology at two prestigious universities in Ulaanbaatar: the National University of Mongolia (NUM) and the Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST).

Jointly administered by The Asia Foundation and its local partner, the Zorig Foundation, the Merali Scholarship Program provides financial support, career guidance, and training in life skills. Because many of these young women are away from their families and living in the big city for the first time, life
skills training makes them more resilient, responsible and self-reliant, and better prepares them for success in the competitive labor market.

The story of Ulziisaikhan typifies many Merali Scholars. Her parents and two brothers live in rural Khovd aimag, and a third brother, the eldest, works in Ulaanbaatar. Her mother has been disabled by a stroke, and her father is chronically ill; neither is able to work. From an early age, Ulziisaikhan liked to make architectural sketches, and she was particularly interested in mathematics, chemistry, and physics. Pursuing her interest in construction, she studied bricklaying for a year and a half in a technical school. Then, with a Merali Scholarship, she was able to continue her education at MUST, where she studies construction management. “This scholarship program has given hope,” she says, “not only to me, but to so many young women. I am very grateful for this opportunity.”

A Merali Scholarship also changed the life of Tungalag, a third-year student at the NUM School of Mathematics and Computer Science. She comes from a family of five in Ulaanbaatar, including two brothers and a sister, all older, and her mother, who is a single parent. Her mother is an accountant, and her older brothers and sister are students at NUM and MUST. “In my family, everyone is a student except my mom,” she says, “and it’s really tough for her to pay all the costs of tuition. I applied for the Merali Scholarship Program when I had just been admitted to NUM, and I was really happy to get this scholarship. It’s a golden opportunity, not just for me, but for my family.”

Oyun-Erdene is another recipient of the Merali Scholarship Program. She lives with her family of seven in Ulaanbaatar. Her mother is a kindergarten teacher, and her father is retired after 25 years of military service. Her dream is to become a renewable energy engineer. “When I was in eighth grade,” she says, “we watched a German documentary about renewable energy. I learned that our planet is now facing a crisis of energy resources and climate change. It showed me that the best solution is renewable energy. That is when I decided to become an engineer.” She is currently a third-year renewable energy student at the School of Energy Engineering, MUST.

In her free time, Oyun-Erdene volunteers with Young Women for Change, a club that raises awareness about human rights, gender equality, democratic values, and young women’s empowerment. “I joined Young Women for Change because of the discrimination that I often face as a female engineering student. A lot of people see engineering as men’s work, and I constantly have to fight that gender stereotype, because I want to be the best engineer in my field.” When she graduates from MUST, she is planning to work at Mongolia’s first renewable energy station, just completed this year. “The Merali Scholarship Program is important because it supports women’s participation in science and technology,” she says.

The Merali Scholarship Program was established by the late Mr. Pandju Merali, a successful businessman, entrepreneur, and philanthropist, to honor his late wife, Shirin. It provides young women in the developing world with access to higher education. The program has grown to support over 450 young women in five countries: Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.
EMPOWERING DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES THROUGH SMALL-SCALE FARMING

After the Mongolian Women Farmers’ Association (MWFA) was established in 1991, The Asia Foundation organized a study tour to Taiwan for selected persons to learn how to establish small scale farming businesses. It was a golden opportunity, which helped to strengthen MWFA’s capacity to broaden our aims.”
Ms. Byatskhandai Jargal, Founder, MWFA

Despite high economic growth rates, 27.4 percent of the population of Mongolia still lives below the poverty line. In the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, whose 1.2 million people are almost half of the country’s population, the economic circumstances of residents of the ger areas are particularly
poor. Around 60 percent of the city’s residents live in these large, unplanned settlements characterized by high unemployment rates and lack of access to basic services. In the countryside, poverty stands at 35.5 percent, and there are few economic opportunities. Many nomadic families have had to give up herding due to the loss of their livestock in especially harsh winters known as dzuds, and they are now struggling to survive.

Since 2006, The Asia Foundation and Give2Asia have worked with the Mongolian Women Farmers Association (MWFA) to assist vulnerable women and their families in improving their livelihoods. As a result of our most recent project, disadvantaged women, male and female single heads of households, and unemployed youth in ger areas and selected provinces have become more financially independent and increased their household income. The project provided training to these groups in the construction and use of greenhouses and cold cellars, and in small-scale gardening and vegetable planting. The Asia Foundation and Give2Asia also assisted disadvantaged women and youth to engage in vegetable farming in the aimags of Khovd and Selenge and the remote Nalaikh district of Ulaanbaatar.

The average incomes of participating families increased by 12.1 percent. They also saved money, because they no longer needed to purchase vegetables for their own use. And participating families spent more time together while farming, which contributed to more positive family relationships and a reduction of social problems such as alcoholism and domestic violence. Business cooperatives were established by family members to support each other in their business ventures. In fields where the vegetables were planted, the yield per hectare increased three to four times. The construction of cold cellars now allows families to store harvested vegetables during Mongolia’s long, cold winters.

Ms. Dulmaa Jamiyandorj is one of the women who participated in the project. She lives on the outskirts of one of the ger areas, where she is the head of household and has four children and seven grandchildren.

On her green plot of land, she is growing potatoes, cabbages, carrots and zucchinis. “I used to sew leather jackets and sell them, but it was not enough to live on,” she says, “so in 2005, I applied to participate in MWFA’s training on vegetable gardening. After the training, MWFA and The Asia Foundation gave my group a greenhouse, which was built in my yard for communal use. Since then, I have built two more greenhouses in my yard for myself, and I have planted all kinds of vegetables. I sell them in the market,” she says proudly while digging up some potatoes. She is now a volunteer member of MWFA and teaches other women how to grow vegetables at home.

“The support of The Asia Foundation has strengthened our capacity for the long term,” says Ms. Byatskhandai Jargal, an agronomist and farmer who founded the MWFA. “Some 400 to 500 households are now involved in MWFA’s trainings, which they organize themselves, and entire families now often apply to participate in the trainings, which previously had drawn mostly single women heads of households.
The Asia Foundation’s Books for Asia program is committed to connecting Mongolian institutions with high-quality material from some of the world’s best information resources. When the Foundation first started its programming in Mongolia, Books for Asia responded to the critical need for English-language books by donating publications that were not yet available in the country.
“In 1993, Mongolian society was very enthusiastic, optimistic, and naïve,” recalls Member of Parliament Demberel Sambuu, Chairman and CEO of the Mongolia National Chamber of Commerce and Industry. “We were learning the ABCs of a market economy and how to live in this new society. We did not have any books on market economics, so The Asia Foundation, through its Books for Asia program, formed our first library.”

Since then, the program has provided more than half a million books, donated by leading U.S. publishers, to a wide variety of Mongolian institutions. With Mongolia’s vast territory, one of the country’s main educational challenges is providing resources to its far-flung communities. “Mongolia is sparsely populated and has a huge territory, but I can proudly say that everyone knows Books for Asia because of the books they have donated. There is not a single library that has not received books from Books for Asia,” says Ms. Bayaraa Bat-Erdene, Policy Officer for Libraries and Printing at the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism.

“I especially remember a big event in 2008,” she continued. “I traveled to Khuvsgul aimag with some officials from the Foundation and the Mongolian government. The dirt road was very bumpy, and we were exhausted when we reached the aimag. But when we saw the little children from the elementary school singing English songs and speaking basic English while holding the books donated by Books for Asia, I was really proud. In the 1990s, there were no English books in the libraries, and there were very few English-speaking people. But in 2008, I saw that many children in the countryside were learning English. That is a big achievement, and Books for Asia has played a major role.”

Books for Asia helps remote and rural areas meet their information needs by donating brand-new books to nearly 400 institutions annually, including schools, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and government policy-making institutions throughout the country. One of the program’s recipients has been the Children’s Book Palace, which houses over 100,000 books in Mongolian, Russian, English, and other languages that cater to children and young people of all ages.

Ms. Darisuren Gelegjamts, the head of the Children’s Book Palace’s Department of Reading and Service, recalls: “I have cooperated with Books for Asia for the last eight years, and Books for Asia has donated 200 books to the ‘big knowledge reading room.’ I think children of the kindergarten and elementary school are greatly affected by Books for Asia books, because the books are of high quality and have illustrations with explanation. The books have provided a lot of knowledge, not only to children, but also to teachers. As for myself, I have learned many new English words through the donated books.”

Recently, through Mongolia’s Millennium Challenge Account, Books for Asia contributed 14,300 books to 77 vocational education and training institutions and 60 health centers across the country. In the coming years, Books for Asia will be exploring new program areas, including the creation and dissemination of open education resources, and the growing number of free, customizable, educational materials available online. Through a new partnership with the American Center for Mongolian Studies, the program will be further expanding its reach by collaborating on distribution and special projects such as librarian training.
PROTECTING MONGOLIA’S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Within the boundaries of Mongolia there are many unique species of plants and animals that have been affected to varying degrees by human activities. Rates of climate change and economic growth in Mongolia are among the fastest in the world. These two rates of change will undoubtedly affect Mongolia’s ecological communities. Research will help us predict what types of changes we are likely to see, and what types of measures we can take to ensure potential negative impacts of those changes on ecological communities and human livelihoods are minimized.”—Michael Grundler, 2011–2012 Luce Scholar at the National University of Mongolia

Since its launch in 1974, the signature program of the Henry Luce Foundation, the Luce Scholars program, has been administered in Asia by The Asia Foundation. The year long program places young scholars from the United States, based on their interests and experience, with organizations in countries where The Asia Foundation is working. With a BA in ecology and evolutionary biology from Cornell University, Michael Grundler chose to work and study in Mongolia as a Luce Scholar to learn about the country and its history. He was placed at the National University of Mongolia (NUM), where he worked to develop an instructional framework in ecology and statistics that future instructors can use to further develop the curricula in these two important subject areas.

Grundler worked under the supervision of Dr. Boldgiv Bazartseren, an alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania and holder of the Taylor Family-Asia Foundation Endowed Chair in Ecology and Conservation Biology. The endowed chair was established in 2008 with a gift from Milbrey Rennie, a trustee of The Asia Foundation and its partner organization Give2Asia, and her husband, David Taylor, to further the study of ecology in Mongolia. “The Endowed Chair has been an important development in higher education and research in Mongolia,” says Dr. Boldgiv, “and I am grateful for The Asia Foundation’s support and the Taylor family’s generosity. It sets a precedent that I hope other organizations and donors can build upon and expand.” A common phenomenon in the United States, privately endowed chairs enable scholars such as Dr. Boldgiv to focus on their academic research without the distraction of raising research funds.

Now in its fifth year, the endowed chair has allowed NUM to purchase much-needed lab equipment and furniture, enabling students in the ecology department for the first time to conduct soil and water sampling and analysis at a scientific level. Just as importantly, the endowed chair has funded the development of ecology and biology textbooks in Mongolian. “During my time in Mongolia, Dr. Boldgiv and I worked together on the Mongolian translation of a popular textbook in evolutionary biology,” says Grundler. “A direct result of the completion of this project has been a conference in evolutionary biology hosted by NUM, which was attended by the author of the textbook and several prominent evolutionary biologists.”

Through the generous support of the Taylor Family, additional funds will be available this year for the establishment of a scholarship fund to provide partial financial support to masters candidates in the ecology department.
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