



Urban Governance Project in Mongolia



photos by Miroslav Hodecek

Since the 1990s, Mongolia has undergone a dramatic political and economic transition. Despite the recent economic downturn, following years of unprecedented growth from 2010-2014, significant rural to urban migration continues as employment opportunities and living conditions are perceived to be better in Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar. With a total population of three million, according to 2015 statistics, almost half of the country (1.34 million) now lives in the capital. Among other factors, such as the lack of affordable housing and limited space, migrants from the countryside often settle in *ger* districts, which have become sprawling unplanned neighborhoods with unequal access to public services. By increasing access to information at the decision-making and planning level and by improving the capacity of *khoro* civil servants and administrators of Ulaanbaatar, the Urban Governance Project (UGP) seeks to better urban livelihoods within the urban context of Mongolia.

PROJECT GOAL

The Asia Foundation is implementing UGP with an overall goal to support and strengthen subnational governments which are empowered, democratic, accountable to citizens, and provide sustainable services that respond to citizens' needs.

PROJECT OUTCOMES AND COMPONENTS

UGP will achieve its goal through the attainment of three outcomes:

1. Access and use of citizen information is improved for planners and decision-makers of Municipality of Ulaan-

baatar (MUB) to contribute to demand-driven inclusive policies

2. A streamlined approach is developed for the delivery of decentralized administrative services to improve their efficiency
3. A capacity building framework and training program for MUB public servants is developed and institutionalized to improve the professional delivery of public services

PROJECT AREAS

DEVELOPMENT OF GIS MAPS FOR IMPROVED DECISION-MAKING

UGP is working to develop Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps for Local Development Fund (LDF) projects such as street lights and poverty maps, which aim to identify lower income households in all *ger* area *khoroos* of Ulaanbaatar to help decision-makers better target local investments and improve urban planning. In addition, improvements with regards to usability of LDF citizens' input forms are envisioned to improve citizen participation in decision-making and the prioritization of local investments and address the ongoing challenge of information dissemination. To improve accessibility of citizen-supplied information, UGP plans to bring information and data "on-line" through the development of an easy-to-use application. This will support and improve the use of readily accessible information to key planners and decision-makers.

DECENTRALIZED AND STREAMLINED SERVICES FOR CITIZENS

Through consultations with the City, and following the identification of the most frequently requested services, process mapping will be conducted to streamline and decentralize, where appropriate, public services provided at the *khoro* level. Three such services will be identified, readied, and piloted for decentralization. The streamlining process will ensure considerations of gender and vulnerable populations are taken, so that the piloted efforts to decentralize services are inclusive, both in terms of accessibility and meeting citizens' needs. Such decentralization and de-concentration should save time for both service providers and users and therefore improving the overall delivery of services.

CAPABILITY STRENGTHENING FRAMEWORK AND TRAINING PROGRAM

UGP is developing a capacity-building training framework for the City, district, and *khoro* civil servants. The target beneficiary groups for UGP includes *khoro* governors, *khoro* social workers, *khoro* organizers, livelihood support councils, and *khese* leaders who are often the first line of civil servants that citizens interact with and request assistance from within the *ger* area *khoroos*. Following the development of the framework, UGP will collaborate with MUB, the National Academy of Governance, and stakeholders to develop custom modules and courses that provide both theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to the beneficiaries' job descriptions, contribute to their continuous professional development, and in turn improve the quality and potentially the number of public services delivered at the *khoro* level, to the citizens of Ulaanbaatar.

DURATION

July 2015 – December 2018

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Municipality of Ulaanbaatar (MUB)

SUPPORT

The Urban Governance Project (UGP) is generously funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) under the Governance and Decentralization Program II.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Project is implemented in 87 *ger* [portable round dwellings used in Mongolia] area and mixed (i.e. *ger* and apartment) *khoroos* [smallest administrative unit in Ulaanbaatar], which covers all nine districts of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and reaches 850,000 citizens. The selection of *khoroos* was made at the request of MUB city officials in an effort to provide equitable, inclusive, and quality public services for residents of Ulaanbaatar. The Asia Foundation will synergize its project activities with other development partners, which focus on good governance issues such as civic engagement, decentralization policy support, local governance, and citizen participation.

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC. Working with public and private partners, the Foundation receives funding from a diverse group of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals.



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