

# Economically Empowering Women in Mongolia



**The Asia Foundation**  
Improving Lives, Expanding Opportunities

The Asia Foundation's Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) project supports women's organizations to work on a range of economic empowerment issues, while building capacity, and multi-stakeholder coalitions to pursue changes that create an enabling environment for women to participate fully in Mongolia's economy.



There is a significant gender gap in labor force participation and leadership in the Mongolian economy, with women's participation in the labor market actually decreasing by ten percent over the past 20 years. High rates of domestic violence and intimate partner violence; restrictive gender norms, especially surrounding caregiving responsibilities and unpaid work; a lack of coordinated advocacy efforts; women being excluded from policy decisions; lack of financing and the gender pay gap; and precarious working conditions with high rates of sexual harassment all contribute to the lack of women's economic empowerment in Mongolia.

## **PARTNERING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY**

The WEE project is partnering with civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly those focused on women's issues, to enhance their capacity and engagement on women's economic empowerment. Working with CSOs to build a strong, broad-based

social movement based on feminist principles is key to making progress on removing the constraints that are limiting women's full economic participation. The project works with Mongolian civil society to assess current needs, and design trainings and mentorship opportunities accordingly. In parallel to these activities, grants to support CSOs and enhance their capacity and effectiveness in advocating for women's economic empowerment will be provided.

## **FOSTERING COALITIONS & NETWORKS**

The WEE project is supporting coalitions and networks, representing a variety of stakeholders, to advocate for social and economic policy changes for women. The project aims to support a holistic and inclusive approach to policy making that prioritizes equal gender rights as imperative to economic inclusion, and thus, a thriving economy. Specific activities to build coalitions will include, workshops and networking events focused on women's issues,

funds to support women's engagement in economic policy dialogue, coalition-building grants for social and economic policy dialogue, and support for women's civil society networks in rural areas.

## **SUPPORTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

The WEE project will nurture and support current and aspiring women-owned businesses. Direct support for women entrepreneurs is crucial to help women achieve financial independence that is often hindered by restrictive gender norms and precarious working conditions that limit women's access to leadership roles and economic participation. The WEE project will build on the success of The Asia Foundation's existing Women's Business Center to contribute to an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs and increase the number of professionally women-led businesses. Supporting activities include developing a network of women's business trainers; assessing women-headed value chains; offering mentorships and fellowships for rural women-led businesses; increasing women's access to finance; and supporting advocacy for policies to promote women's entrepreneurship.

*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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