



Women's Empowerment Through Education

Women's empowerment is essential to reducing poverty and promoting women's economic opportunities in Mongolia. Education is a vital path to empowerment for vulnerable women. While access to education has improved for Mongolian girls, they still face challenges in the job market and remain underrepresented in the political system. It also remains challenging for women from low-income and rural families to attend university. The Foundation is committed to improving access to education for underprivileged women in Mongolia.



THE MERALI SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 2010, the Merali Foundation generously supported the launch of the Merali Foundation University Scholarship Program for Mongolian Women (Merali Scholarship Program). Since that time, The Asia Foundation has had the privilege of providing four-year scholarships to 160 girls to pursue undergraduate degrees in science. The program is jointly implemented by The Asia Foundation and its local partner, the Zorig Foundation.

Committed to improving access to education across Asia, the Merali Scholarship Program is specifically designed to support university education for academically promising young women who excelled in high school, but due to financial constraints, would struggle to afford university tuition. Merali Scholarships cover tuition costs, fees, and educational supplies, including books. Housing costs are also covered for limited number of eligible girls.

The scholarships allow students to study at two prestigious public universities in Ulaanbaatar: the National University of

Mongolia (NUM) and the Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST). The program is particularly aimed at girls who would like to study hard sciences, an area in which women remain underrepresented in Mongolia.

Throughout their studies, scholarship recipients also enjoy various other opportunities, such as English classes, job fairs, and networking opportunities, to improve their chances of finding employment on completion of their degrees. These events are organized jointly by The Asia Foundation and the Zorig Foundation.

THE MERALI FOUNDATION

The Merali Foundation was established by Pandju Merali in honor of his late wife, Shirin Merali. Together with The Asia Foundation, it has supported over 500 young women in five countries across Asia: Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Vietnam.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Since 2010 over 120 Mongolian young women from low income families have graduated with their Bachelor degree in hard sciences, and programs in social sciences. In 2015, 40 more girls will commence their university studies. The candidates for Merali Scholarships have demonstrated academic achievement and a commitment to learning. Selection is based on the following:

- Recipients must be entering their first year of college or university.
- Recipients must have secured admission to MUST or NUM, in the fields of hard or social sciences.
- Recipients will be able to demonstrate financial need for the scholarship.



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.

PUREVSUREN ENKHTUR, MERALI SCHOLAR & LABORATORY ENGINEER



“Thanks to the Merali Scholarship, I’ve had the opportunity to study a profession that I’m interested in and enjoy. This scholarship has been the greatest thing that has happened to my life and has helped my family a lot.”

— Purevsuren Enkhtur

As herders, Purevsuren’s family faced financial hardships and could not send her to university. Purevsuren had high university entrance scores and good grades, and was selected for the Merali Scholarship Program. The scholarship allowed her pursue an undergraduate degree in environmental ecology at the National University of Mongolia. Purevsuren spent her summers doing thesis research and acquiring work experience at the Institute of Geography in the soil research laboratory. During her studies, she earned several university awards including Uvurkhangai Province’s Best Researcher Student 2014, Best Student of National University of Mongolia 2014, and Institute of Geography’s Young Researcher 2014. Purevsuren currently works as a Laboratory Engineer, and reports being financially independent, and she continues to grow and learn from her colleagues.



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