

Strengthening Mongolia's Justice System



Strong professionals in the justice sector maintain rule of law and promote Mongolia's democratic and economic growth. Building the capacity of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and other legal professionals is important to keep up with social and legal changes, and enable the legal system to be responsive to social demand.



In the past thirty years, social and economic life in Mongolia have changed rapidly, and so has legislation. One of the key issues hindering Mongolia's continued growth is the lack of capacity in the justice sector. Many challenges, such as inefficiency, irregularity, opaque decision-making process, and weak accountability structures, are the result of outdated legal education and a lack of consistency in court decisions regarding laws. These have proven to be counterproductive in the face of fast-changing legislation, international commitments, and steadily rising court cases. Moreover, these challenges have contributed to the erosion of public confidence in the legal system, and a widely held perception that the judiciary is corrupt and lacking in independence.

With the aim of strengthening the capacity of young legal professionals in the Mongolian criminal justice sector, and developing a sustainable model for their continued professional development The Asia Foundation is implementing a four-year project in collaboration with key institutions. Generously funded by the U.S. Department of State and in partnership with the Mongolian Bar Association

(MBA), General Prosecutors Office (GPO) and Judicial General Council (JGC), the project provides legal education and training in Mongolia.

ADDRESSING KEY TRAINING NEEDS

The Foundation along with partner organizations completed assessments of training needs for legal professionals. Each partner institution has since then initiated efforts to improve their methodology and continues to update their training approaches. Meanwhile the Foundation makes efforts to institutionalize the improvements of the training programs, digitize training contents, and improve partner organizations' online training systems. For example, the JGC successfully conducted a comprehensive pre-appointment training using the newly developed training handbook; the MBA initiated a process of improving their continuing legal education program and submitted policy amendments to the MBA's General Council, and GPO is introducing a curriculum for its new training system that includes specific training frameworks based on years of experience for new

prosecutors. In addition to supporting partner organizations, the Foundation contributes to the capacity development of the legal sector by helping develop country-specific transnational crime training modules designed for legal professionals in Mongolia.

MENTORSHIP FOR YOUNG LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Official mentorship among the legal professionals is non-existent. Therefore, the Foundation is collaborating with the stakeholder organizations to implement specific mentorship programs that fulfill their needs. After a series of successful pilot mentorship programs, the Foundation continues to support the MBA and JGC to institutionalize mentorship programs as part of their training systems. The project seeks to develop a thematic mentorship program with the GPO and conduct mentorship sessions for young prosecutors.

EXCHANGE & LEARNING AMONG LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

Cross-regional collaboration and learning is a key strength of The Asia Foundation. The Foundation's Mongolia office is working closely with the Laos office to expand and adapt the project to a second country. Drawing from best practices and lessons learned in Mongolia, the Foundation is working directly with stakeholders in Laos to replicate this program in a way that addresses the unique challenges in Laos. Engaging them in discussions on the capacity development of young legal professionals in Laos, both virtual and in-person, will help stakeholders in Laos to analyze and develop plans for improving training and mentorship programs designed for young legal professionals.

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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