

ProjectsAbroad Mongolia



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Editor's note

Dear volunteers,

It is incredible that we are in April. It is amazing to see how the weather gets warmer day by day. This month, we created Dream Discovery Teams who work for underprivileged children especially for orphaned and abandoned children to give them hope and dream.

Our Dream Discovery Team did a Dream Outreach activity in Lotus Care Centre in which volunteers can join together to create wish boxes with the kids. Volunteers were saying "I want to adopt them".

I am so proud of all our Volunteers who helped unconditionally for orphaned kids. It is very impressive and touched my heart.

They not only helped the Dream Outreach activity but also donated necessary facilities to 2nd Maternity Hospital.

I would like to thank all the volunteers and the Dream Discovery team who were willing to help poor and orphaned children and at the same time discover a new life in Mongolia.

Sincerely,

Zulaa

Social Manager

Projects Abroad Mongolia

Donation

Volunteers of Projects Abroad Mongolia, two professional midwives from Australia, Clare Immens and Kate Stein, came to The State Maternal House-2 for about two weeks and donated necessary facilities on March 29th right before the day of Doctor's celebration.

Midwives of State Maternal House-2 and related staff appreciated

their warm heartedness and expressed their gratitude by inviting them to the doctor's evening meal. Donation activity was fantastic and wonderful.



Dirty day

We all prepared for Dirty Day 2 days ago to make piñatas for kids. It was so much fun making piñatas with volunteers. We put sweets, lollipops, toys and chocolate inside.

The Dirty Day's weather was warm and perfect for staying outside all day long. We were all very excited to go "Erdem Tugs" Orphanage to meet with the sweet kids and paint Summer House. When we arrived at the destination, children and the orphanage's teacher greeted us happily. The first view of Summer House showed it to be an old and dirty white colour. When



we started to paint Summer House the kids wanted to join with us so we helped them to paint their hand prints on a dried section of the wall. Some of the kids drew stars on it too. Volunteers were so happy to have fun with the kids when they were drawing decorations on the Summer House.

Meanwhile some of our staff painted the main door with blue and black colours. The Summer House became like a princess's dancing stage. Meanwhile other kids decorated piñatas we brought for them to decorate and the Dirty Day finished with piñata breaking. All day long everybody was really happy and had a great day.

Staff page

BIRTHDAY IN LOTUS CHILDREN CARE CENTRE

I, Zulaa, as a Social Manager of Projects Abroad, celebrated my birthday in "Lotus" Care Centre with volunteers. We played with the children and had a huge birthday cake. We all made a Wish Box as u can see below. The children made hearts, wings or clouds or just any shape they liked from coloured sheets of paper and wrote their wishes on them. This was the moment they put their wishes in to wish box. One of the kids, as I remember, wishes to become a bus driver and he drew bus in his letter.



The orphanage's kids gave me beautiful gifts with a wonderful poem which they wrote themselves. It was the best birthday celebration ever with wonderful gifts.

THE NARANTUUL “BLACK” MARKET

The Black Market (Narantuul Zakh) is located in Bayanzurkh district 3-4 km from



downtown. Here you can find almost everything, from food to goods and you can buy things even cheaper than at other markets, especially in bulk. Apart from a lot of Chinese clothing and goods, you can also find traditional Mongolian garments, complete ger tents with interiors, horse saddles and stirrups, music, electronics and much more. It is a large and well organised market, but hectic during the peak hours. Be careful for pickpockets, and don't take any unnecessary valuables with you. Entrance fee is 50 MNT. You can take a taxi or microbus to get there, ask for Narantuul Zakh.

LOTUS ORPHANAGE HISTORY

Now we would like to introduce you to the 'Lotus' Orphanage. It has its own interesting past so here we present to you the 'Lotus' Orphanage history:

In 1993 Didi Kalika, an Australian yoga teacher living in Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar was moved by the plight of the children living on the streets and founded the Lotus Children's



Centre. She started simply by giving food and basic medical care, and soon realised that serious change was necessary to make real impact.

With the help of friends, Didi arranged a yard in the ger district of Yarmag 15 km out of UB. The move to Yarmag was necessary to give children space away from their lives on the streets of Ulaanbaatar. In 1995 Lotus Children's Centre was registered as an official Mongolian charity.

Towards the end of the 90's, the children Lotus served moved from mainly street kids to abandoned babies. Due to harsh economic conditions, some Mongolian families found it hard to keep their newborn babies. Mongolian authorities would ask Lotus to care for babies that were found under stairwells or in rubbish bins, often in the depth of winter.

Lotus started a Kindergarten at the Yarmag property in 1997. It was around this time that our summer camp started, sending kids to the National Park in Terelj for their summer holidays to play and swim. Didi was awarded Mongolian Mother of the Year Award in 2001. She was also made a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunshine.

Due to the lack of necessary paperwork for Lotus children to start at government schools, in 2004 Lotus converted an old general goods store in Yarmag into a primary school. The kindergarten was moved into the same building. This was necessary to guarantee that all Lotus children would have teaching up to the 5th grade. Around this time the situation of children in Mongolia gradually improved, with less babies coming to Lotus. Lotus Centre is now home to up to 150 children at any one time. It carries out many children and family support activities aimed at helping family units endure, and to alleviate the poverty cycle to ultimately provide basic rights to children.

VOICES OF THE WORLD PROJECT

Voices of the World is an online global initiative developed by Projects Abroad, the leading global organiser of overseas volunteer work placements. Through the website, young aspiring journalists from Mongolia or Romania, South Africa, England, France or Senegal (to name only a very few) will have the opportunity to meet and exchange views with one another and in this way to come to understand the world and to express their views on it better and with more empathy.

In Mongolia, we created free-of-charge Journalism Clubs who contribute to Voices of the World under the supervision of members of staff Zulaa and volunteer Anna.

We as members discussed topics and decided to write underprivileged level of Mongolian society. Therefore we are aiming to find poor people with strong dreams. First of all, we will give them moral support to the poor family who has strong dreams and help them to let their dreams come true. Due to our assignment we selected twin girl aged 18 who became orphans in their childhood age 5. They are very hardworking girls and say “we have our dream which is to help orphan kids like us”. In order to help these twin girls we did “Dream Outreach” in Lotus Care Centre and wrote their stories to the Voices of the World’s website.



DREAM OUTREACH

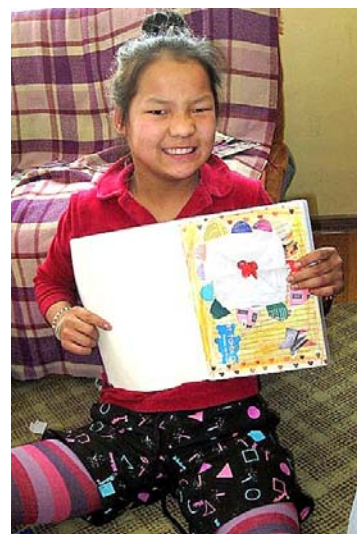
We have done Dream Outreach in Lotus Care Centre with Journalism club. Dream outreach activity was aimed at helping underprivileged children and young people find their dreams - and realising them. It's about finding realistic hopes for future professions. We lectured Realisation of Your Dream with fun activities with volunteers.

For instance, kids made flowers on their Dream Album which we donated, and wrote down their dream inside of the flower which they can open to look at. Volunteers helped them to do their flowers.

We created a wish tree together and they all prayed to wish tree to make their dream come true.

The most wonderful activity was that we wrote praise on each other's backs to raise their self-esteem.

Volunteers were so happy to give hope to the orphan kids.



THOM GRAY - CARE IN MONGOLIA

By Thom Gray – April 2011

The question “why Mongolia?” is one I’ve had to form a practiced and often repeated answer to. The real reason is that Mongolia is so different. It is a culture so incredibly alien from the rainy island of Britain, but in some ways so similar that I couldn’t help but explore it. So I did. Two months in the land of (mostly) sun and blue skies. So in late June I set off to work on a care placement in one of the most sparsely populated countries on earth, not that you’d be able to tell.

Landing in Genghis Khan Airport I was greeted by a very stern official who, as soon as he realised I was a volunteer, shone me a huge smile and guided me through customs like a dream. I was greeted by a Projects Abroad staff member and quickly began my journey to the city. As we drove through the outskirts we could see glimpses of the Ger districts, which are where I also had some of my best times.

The city of Ulaanbaatar (of which, I’ve seen numerous spellings, something you become accustomed to as translations of their Cyrillic alphabet vary) has one million, two hundred thousand descendants of Genghis Khan. There was such variety with the gloriously beautiful central square and a monument of Sükhbaatar (a Mongolian revolutionary leader).

Soon I was ready to meet the host family I was to live with. The block we pulled up to was, to not put too fine a point on it, definitely built during the communist period. It was built the same as ten others within sight. I climbed the steps with trepidation, but that turned out to be completely misplaced as the welcome I received from the host family was warm (the vodka might have helped, which was an omnipresent item in all Mongolian households).

I was then introduced to my first words of Mongolian. Now, before you get an image of any Chinese sounding language, or anything derived from the U.S.S.R. you must remember that these people have been around long before these ‘superpowers’ were learning to talk. Their language is one of complexity, not only to speak but to read and to understand. If you are willing to have a shot, though, the Mongolians are so receptive that someone is trying to understand and learn a culture which is too often discounted. At the minimum you need hello, goodbye and to ask for things in shops. How to direct a taxi is also fun, as the word for left

sounds exactly like saying 'zoom' really emphatically. Indeed we were often tempted to take three lefts instead of saying the much more pedestrian 'barr-ohn'.

So to the bit which will be of real interest to most; my placement. I chose Care because it looked like the project where I could do the most help for the neediest people, and this turned out to be dead on. The Notre Dame Orphanage, which was located in a Ger district and was run by Sister Marie Françoise who was a kind, caring, if occasionally fearsome, nun. It always brought a smile to my day to be able to just text a nun.

Anyway back to the orphanage; the children were wonderful. There were about twenty four, with a constant stream of babies coming in and out when their mothers were not able to cope for a couple days or a week. I worked in the morning on a new building, doing such basics as helping build a kitchen unit, or fitting shelves along with a few more complex projects. In the afternoon I would help with the children, teaching them football, keeping them occupied or, with the girls, teaching them salsa. If you put the time in for them, they will love you for it and each and every day I grew more and more attached.

They were scamps, as you'd expect, and there was a constant stream of competition for attention as you would expect with that many children, but each one was an angel at heart. The older ones will help you with chores, whether that is pairing socks or helping cook lunch, while the younger ones play with old bikes or kick a ball around.

Names were a struggle for the first month, but I soon got to grips with that and after a few unimpressed looks from the older two boys, they all decided the big Brit was alright after all and I barely had a spare moment.

The orphanage, despite being better than the state orphanages which throw kids out in the minus forty degree winters, was not funded sufficiently. They need anyone who is willing to give a hand with menial tasks, and anyone with any construction experience, whether repairing a seat or cementing a roof, would be such an incredible aid.

Those with fewer skills in that area will work in the girl's house, washing, cleaning, preparing activities and often helping with homework. This may sound incredibly stressful but the kids will often sleep after lunch, or be taken by the (few) staff to do homework or learn which gives you a couple of hours to go try the local cuisine.

Mongolian food varies, with Buuz and Khuushuur being well worth a try (dumplings and fried mutton) as Mongolians find 101 different ways to cook mutton and yak. If this doesn't take your fancy, there are hordes of "Irish Pubs"

which serve dishes which resemble those from home. The obsession with Irish Pubs is a strange one as, when questioned, many Mongolians don't even know what Ireland is, let alone where. Also I defy you to find a single pint of Guinness in the entire city.

The traditional alcoholic drink of Airag is worth a shot as well, if only a shot. I'll be kind and let you be prepared that it is in fact fermented horses milk. Not everyone's cup of tea!

So you've seen what the city has to offer. You've eaten horse and seen the opera and visited about as many museums as you can contemplate. What else is there on offer?

Mongolia is famous for its steppes, which are rolling hills which go on for a space the size of Eastern Europe. A camping trip was a fun experience as my fellow volunteers and I watched how the Nomads kill and eat a sheep (not for the squeamish), and then relax on the lakeside as the water rushes past, absorbing life in what is truly outer Mongolia.

There is also the Gobi Desert if that happens to be your thing. I didn't have time to visit, as I offered to work a lot of my Saturdays because I loved the orphanage so much, but from what I hear it is truly awe inspiring.

There are some downsides to Mongolia. Since the language is difficult it feels so alien in the first few days, and especially because the layout of the city is something you have to get used to. Meet the other volunteers and get the hang of moving around the city and you'll soon be using the world's most complicated traffic light system like you invented it! It's a city to crack, but boy once you do it, you won't want to leave.

Oh, and one last thing, don't eat the fish. The country is landlocked; that fish is NOT fresh. And before you say they could be from the rivers, take a look at the rivers first....

Loving Hut and "Dream Discovery Academy"

By Annette – April 2011

Today I had lunch in a Loving Hut. This is not a by-the-hour hotel or anything like that, but a chain of not vegetarian but **vegan** restaurants in Ulaanbaatar. Have you ever come across a chain of vegan restaurants anywhere in the world? The least likely place to find one I thought was UB (short for Ulaanbaatar), but once again life taught me the lesson not to be fooled by prejudice. (Some of you will remember that I even 'meat-trained' a couple of weeks before leaving Brussels in order to be prepared for the meat-heavy diet in Mongolia).



Zulaa, one of the girls in the Projects Abroad office, had asked me to come to a meeting in the afternoon. I didn't understand on the phone what it was all about, so I was rather surprised when she and Anna, a volunteer from the UK, explained that they were just starting a new charity - would I like to join them? Something unexpected *a/ways* happens in Mongolia ... So we spent the entire afternoon in a meeting with three other enormously creative and enthusiastic people, planning for activities for the coming weeks. "Dream Discovery Academy" will aim at helping underprivileged children and young people find their dreams - and realising them. It's about finding realistic hopes for future professions, but health & safety issues are also on the program, as are different creative activities to help these young people see the positive sides of life.

CRADLE OF HISTORY UNCOVERED IN SOUTH EAST MONGOLIA

Grazing his herds, Ts.Batbayar, a herder in Ongon Soum of Sukhbaatar Aimag, which is situated in the extreme east of Mongolia, discovered three bronze cauldrons on an old river bank of sinking earth. These very rare artefacts date back to the Hunnu period or earlier.

In the fall of 2010, archaeologist Dr.Ts.Turbat, discovered several interesting findings including a bone seal and folding travel chair, during an archaeological excavation near Tavan Tolgoi, situated in the wide steppe lands, 40 km southwest of the Soum centre in the territory of Ongon Soum. Starting many years earlier in Ongon Soum, a whole history that has been hidden under the soil began to attract the attention of archaeologists and historians. In this place, valuable and rare artefacts were discovered that belonged to the pre-historic Stone and Bronze age, graveyards, stone figures and monuments of religious relics belonging to Hunnu dynasty and to the Mongol Empire.

On April 5, an exhibition called “Culture and Heritage of Ongon Land” opened at the National Museum. The exhibition displays rare exhibits found in Ongon Soum of Sukhbaatar Aimag and near the Tavan Tolgoi area. Exhibited were almost 400 objects of the new Stone Age, graves of the Bronze Age, artefacts found from graveyards of Mongol aristocrats dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries, and ethnographic items of the 19th and 20th centuries.

These findings were discovered under an archaeological research study conducted by the Archaeology and Anthropology department of the School of Social Science at MSU in Tavan Tolgoi of Ongon Soum in 2004-2010. The discoveries excavated in 2010 by research expedition of Institute of Archaeological of Academy of Sciences, as well as things belonging to private collections of individuals, photos of the Cultural Heritage Centre and exhibits of the National Museum of Mongolia were on display.

“By exhibiting the “Culture and Heritage of Ongon Land” to the public, we tried to demonstrate the artefacts of the unique history and cultural heritage found in just one place in one Soum of Mongolia’s territory. From this, we tried to draw attention to what we need to study and safeguard, what our state and government, and our scientists and researchers need to do”, said G.Mend-Ooye, poet and initiator of this exhibition. “The pre-historic stone figure statues in Tavan Tolgoi, Shiveet and Shartyn in Ongon Soum are not only wonders of Mongolia but of Central Asia which need to be taken under state protection and need to be financially supported”, stressed G.Mend Ooye. There are more than 10 stone

figure statues dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries in Ongon Soum's territory, including many other places that preserve rock pictures and traces of ancient relics and workshops.

The graveyard of Mongolian aristocrats dating back to the time of Mongol Empire was discovered in the autumn of 2004 during a field expedition by late archaeologist D.Navaan, who worked under the framework of the "Dornod Mongolia" scientific source materials. From this period, the department of Archaeology and Anthropology of MSU focused its attention on research activities in the Tavan Tolgoi and registered a total of 62 graveyards belonging to the pre-historic Bronze and Iron ages, to Hunnu and Mongolian periods.

While implementing the "Dornod Mongolia" project in 2002, our Archaeology and Anthropology department discovered a variety of new findings including graveyards dated back to the 13th or 14th century. The excavation of this phenomenal discovery opened a new page for research and study of the history, culture, traditions and customs, social situation and people who lived in that period. Today, our scientists and teachers are engaged in the complex study of historic, archaeological and anthropological investigation of this unique discovery", said D.Tumen, head of the Archaeology and Anthropology department.

In total, 19 finds were discovered and studied in the process of archaeological investigation held in 2004, 2005 and 2007 in the Tavan Tolgoi area. Most artefacts found from the Tavan Tolgoi aristocrats' graveyards were on display for the first time at this exhibition. Scientists consider that this discovery will not only occupy one of the deserving places in the history and culture of Mongolian ethnographic study, but also in the cultural heritage of the whole world.

Quite recently, in the autumn of 2010, researchers of the Archaeological Institute of Academy of Sciences excavated and studied three graveyards in the Tavan Tolgoi area were dated from the Middle Ages period. Two of these graves were seriously damaged, but one was untouched. Discovered among these graveyards were very interesting findings that were never found before under research. For example, a golden decorated top of a hat with turquoise and garnet stones and a lotus flower decoration on the basement, a bone made seal with inscription, a wooden musical instrument, and iron armour.

A significant amount of stone weapons were found in the Tavan Tolgoi area and stone weapon artefacts in whole were dated on the Neolithic or to the new Stone Age period, approximately 8000-4500 years ago, the earliest period known in the history of human life. During a field expedition in 2010, a number of Stone Age articles were collected including 134 items made of non ferrous stones like silicon, chalcedony, jade and jasper.

Useful information

Official Facebook Group!

Check out our Facebook group: [Projects Abroad Mongolia - The Official Group](#)! It is regularly updated with photos from social events and news on the projects and the city of Ulaanbaatar.

Official Newsletter!

Read our monthly newsletter: [The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Mongolia!](#)

Official Country Blog!

See what is going on with Projects Abroad Mongolia! Read our [Country Blog](#).

