



Mongolia: Sustaining Access to and Quality of Education During Economic Difficulties Project

Project Name	Sustaining Access to and Quality of Education During Economic Difficulties Project	
Project Number	50091-002	
Country	Mongolia	
Project Status	Approved	
Project Type / Modality of Assistance	Loan	
Source of Funding / Amount	Loan: Sustaining Access to and Quality of Education during Economic Difficulties	
	Ordinary capital resources	US\$ 50.00 million
Strategic Agendas	Environmentally sustainable growth Inclusive economic growth	
Drivers of Change	Governance and capacity development Knowledge solutions Partnerships	
Sector / Subsector	Education - Pre-primary and primary - Secondary	
Gender Equity and Mainstreaming	Effective gender mainstreaming	
Description	<p>Mongolia is facing severe economic difficulties. Significant cuts in the education budget for 2017 and beyond greatly constrain the government's capacity to mitigate further deterioration of education services. This will result in lost opportunities for pre-primary, primary, and secondary education, especially for children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Support from the Asian Development Bank is urgently needed to minimize the negative effects during this difficult economic period by (i) narrowing the gap in the enrollment capacity of schools and kindergartens in Ulaanbaatar and some aimag (administrative subdivision) centers, (ii) supporting the completion of unfinished curriculum reform and associated assessment system reforms, (iii) ensuring the provision of teaching and learning materials that accompany the new curriculum, (iv) upgrading the skills and knowledge of teachers and managers for the new curriculum and assessments, and (v) strengthening systems for planning and managing education services.</p>	

Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy

The growth of Mongolia's economy has rapidly decelerated since 2011 because of declining foreign direct investment and falling commodity prices. This slowed growth has caused serious economic difficulties, including large revenue shortfalls and cuts in government investment, which are expected to continue beyond 2017 and require the government to reduce public spending further. The government has cut education spending to a minimum, only enough to keep schools and kindergartens operating. Access to and the quality of pre-primary, primary, and secondary education are likely to deteriorate with the growth of the population of kindergartner and school-age children and unaccomplished curriculum and assessment system reforms, unless some mitigating measures are implemented.

Seats in schools and kindergartens have increasingly become unavailable due to the growth in the population of kindergartner and school-age children which has been outpacing the construction and expansion of schools and kindergartens. While enrollments in pre-primary education doubled (105.9%) from school year (SY) 2009 to SY2015, the number of kindergartens increased by only 58.2%. Similarly, enrollments in primary and secondary education rose by 7.8% during SY2012 -SY2015, but only 13 schools were built during the period, an increase of 1.7%. Consequently, the enrollment capacity of schools and kindergartens has been overstretched, with the class size enlarged and 33 schools operating in three shifts in SY2016 (of which 30 are in Ulaanbaatar). The gap in enrollment capacity has been widening particularly in Ulaanbaatar because of disproportionate population growth caused by internal migration. The average class size at Ulaanbaatar schools is 37 at the primary level, the largest in the country, as enrollments expanded by 18.1% during SY2012 -SY2015. With an increase of 41.5% in pre-primary enrollments, the class size at free public kindergartens in Ulaanbaatar is even larger, at 40- 50 students, and students are selected for admission by lottery. Although net enrollment rates at pre-primary, primary, and junior secondary levels have been improving steadily, these may be reversed unless schools and kindergartens are built or expanded. The population of kindergartners is projected to grow further until 2019, while the population of primary and secondary school-age children is expected to rise until 2025.

The curriculum reform, which started in SY2013 with the pilot test of a new curriculum for primary education, remains incomplete without the pilot test and implementation of a new curriculum for senior secondary education. Moreover, the current curriculum still lacks learning outcome standards for students at every grade level, which leaves students and teachers unguided and confused. The current student learning assessment system is not reliable and fails to provide feedback on student learning or education policy. Furthermore, the standards for school performance evaluation have become too outdated to encourage school-based continuing professional development of teachers and school leaders, and effective management of school resources to support the implementation of the current curriculum. Likewise, the current standards for teacher evaluation are too general to help teachers develop knowledge and skills.

The new curriculum was introduced with little accompanying teaching and learning materials (TLM) including-textbooks, teachers' guides, student workbooks, tools, and equipment -provided to implement it, which negatively affected the quality of student learning. There are huge disparities in the distribution of TLM among schools and kindergartens. Schools and kindergartens in rural areas are more disadvantaged than those in urban areas, as the transportation cost is higher. Since a standard set of TLM accompanying the curriculum for each grade does not exist, TLM have been provided on an ad hoc basis, further intensifying disparities.

Existing in-service professional development programs do not assist teachers in adopting a child-centered methodology and the formative and summative assessment and evaluation methods required by the new curriculum. The budget allocated for teacher training is generally too limited to cover even the mandatory training for teachers in the first, fifth, and 10th year of service, causing the quality of education to suffer. In addition, little continuing professional development opportunities are provided for school and kindergarten managers who are expected to provide instructional leadership for the implementation of the curriculum.

The low population density and harsh winters in Mongolia have caused inefficiency in education expenditures. The cost of providing education services is high because (i) education services need to be provided in sparsely populated rural areas; (ii) school dormitory services are needed for one-quarter of the population engaged in seminomadic herding; (iii) constant heating is required in schools, dormitories, and kindergartens during extremely cold winter months; and (iv) many nonteaching staff are employed to operate and maintain schools, dormitories, and kindergartens. The government lacks effective information gathering, planning, and management systems for schools, dormitories, and kindergartens; and resource-sharing mechanisms between schools and kindergartens.

Impact

The project is aligned with more accessible, more equitable, and better quality education system developed

Project Outcome

Description of Outcome

Access to and quality of pre-primary, primary, and secondary education sustained during economic difficulties

Progress Toward Outcome

Implementation Progress

Description of Project Outputs	<p>Gap in enrollment capacity of schools and kindergartens narrowed</p> <p>Unfinished curriculum reform and associated assessment system reforms completed</p> <p>Teaching and learning materials that accompany the new curriculum provided</p> <p>Teachers' and managers' knowledge and skills upgraded for the new curriculum and assessments</p> <p>Systems for planning and managing education services strengthened</p>
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Status of Implementation Progress (Outputs, Activities, and Issues)

Geographical Location Nation-wide

Safeguard Categories

Environment	B
Involuntary Resettlement	C
Indigenous Peoples	C

Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects

Environmental Aspects	<p>Initial environmental examination and public consultations were conducted on 49 potential school and kindergarten construction and expansion sites. All potential impacts have been identified, including dust, noise, vibration from machinery and casting, temporary traffic disturbance, associated risks to the community, and occupational health and safety on-site. Related mitigation measures, construction supervision, monitoring, grievance redress, and reporting have been defined in an environmental management plan. The initial environmental examination has been disclosed on the ADB website. The climate change impact of the project was assessed and classified low climate risk as increases in precipitation and temperatures are unlikely to affect the project outputs. However, the facilities will be designed to minimize risks from increased precipitation, temperature, snowfall, and storm. The project will also introduce increased energy-efficiency measures to reduce heat loss and indirectly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
Involuntary Resettlement	<p>The project will not require any permanent and/or temporary land acquisition or resettlement. Due diligence had been conducted on potential school and kindergarten sites, which confirmed that no physical or economic displacement will ensue because of the project. The construction, expansion, and rehabilitation of schools and kindergartens will be accommodated within the existing premises and compounds. With no planned land acquisition, the project is unlikely to trigger Safeguard Policy Statement requirements for involuntary resettlement.</p>
Indigenous Peoples	<p>The project seeks to sustain access to and quality of education for all kindergartner and school-age children, regardless of ethnicity. The poverty and social analysis confirmed that ethnic groups will not be impacted negatively. Measures to enhance inclusiveness and sensitivity, and maximize project benefits for all vulnerable groups, including ethnic groups, have been incorporated into the social and gender action plan. These include the improvement of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials in the Kazakh language, as well as the introduction of culturally responsive teaching approaches.</p>

Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation

During Project Design Under the project preparatory technical assistance stage, a poverty and social analysis was conducted through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and consultations with project beneficiaries and stakeholders. Special attention was given to the needs and concerns of vulnerable groups, such as children from poor, herder, and migrant families; female students; children with disabilities and special needs; and ethnic children. In addition, extensive consultations were held with all relevant stakeholders through workshops and group and individual meetings.

During Project Implementation

Business Opportunities

Consulting Services	<p>Quality- and cost-based selection: 340.0 person-months - \$1,996,410</p> <p>Least cost selection: 4.0 person-months - \$10,000</p> <p>Individual consultant selection: 95.5 person-months - \$693,500</p>
Procurement	<p>National competitive bidding: 16 contracts -\$38,120,000</p> <p>Shopping: 8 contracts - \$166,000</p>

Responsible ADB Officer	Maruyama, Asako
Responsible ADB Department	East Asia Department
Responsible ADB Division	Urban and Social Sectors Division, EARD

Executing Agencies

*Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Sports
Government Building-III, Suite # 514, Baga toiruu-44, Sukhbaatar district
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia*

Timetable

Concept Clearance	03 Nov 2016
Fact Finding	13 Mar 2017 to 24 Mar 2017
MRM	12 Apr 2017
Approval	20 Nov 2017
Last Review Mission	-
Last PDS Update	21 Nov 2017

Project Page	https://www.adb.org/projects/50091-002/main
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