



# Fifteen Years of Working for the Children in Mongolia



A Short History of Save the Children's Work in Mongolia (1994–2009)



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August 2009  
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

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## FOREWORD

I am delighted to present to you, a publication highlighting Save the Children UK's experiences, achievements and contributions to bring lasting improvements to the lives of Mongolian children during the past 15 years of its presence in the country.

We are producing this publication because we felt the need to capture and to reflect upon our own experiences to date in improving the realisation of those rights which we have decided to work on for the children in Mongolia. Since 1994, we have carried out a number of actions targeted at vulnerable children. We have produced many documents for a variety of purposes and audiences. Yet, we have never produced a single, comprehensive document to inform ourselves and key stakeholders of what we have done and how we have worked since 1994 to bring about positive changes in the lives of Mongolian children. The purpose of this publication is, therefore, to bring these not fully-documented experiences and components together in a single, comprehensive volume, to illustrate and describe what we have done, how we have worked, and the outcome of our work so far to realise the rights of children in this country.

To make this volume more informative and entertaining, we have decided to describe the historical and development context in which Save the Children has worked over the years. We have also included as many photographs as possible to illustrate the instances mentioned, and to include various case histories and statements from relevant individuals about the outcome of some of the programme work we have supported and engaged in.

And why produce such a document now?

There are three main reasons: The first is to commemorate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Save the Children UK's presence in Mongolia. The second is the organisation's regrettable decision to have its Mongolia Programme office closed by mid-summer in 2009, and we wanted to leave behind a legacy. The third is to handover the torch of leadership in fighting for children's rights over to Save the Children Japan, a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, and to hundreds of other like-minded individuals and organisations who will continue to engage in transforming children's lives in Mongolia.

I sincerely hope this publication will inspire all of us to renew our commitments to the wellbeing of children, and to take personal actions toward realising children's rights, no matter where we are or what we do in the world.

Mitsuaki Toyoda

*Country Director*

*Save the Children UK, Mongolia Programme*

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Save the Children wishes to thank Ms. Tungalag Chuluun, a former Country Director of the Save the Children UK Mongolia Programme, for taking a prime role in writing and compiling the country programme experiences and achievements during the last 15 years of its presence in Mongolia. This document would never have been completed in its present shape, had it not been for her involvement and tireless efforts in dealing with the demanding tasks of authorship, compilation and translation. Save the Children also wishes to thank its erstwhile and current Country Directors, John Beauclerk, Marc Laporte, Karlo Pushkaritsa, and Mitsuaki Toyoda for taking time to share invaluable insights from their time and experience in working for the Save the Children UK Mongolia Programme.

Gratitude is also extended to Save the Children's past and current programme staff members – Amaraa Dorjsambuu, Ariuntungalag Tsend, Batkhishig Adilbish, Dulamsuren Erdenebileg, Dulmaa Luvsansharav, Erdenechimeg Badrakh, Gereltuya Tsegmid, Jargal Chuluuntulga, Mandal Urtnasan, Narantuya Byambajav, Narantuya Sanjaa, Olonchimeg Dorj, Oyunbileg Rentsendorj, and Tsendsuren Tumees – for their full-hearted contributions to this publication.

Save the Children is indebted to the British Embassy in Ulaanbaatar for generously supporting the publication of this document. We also would like to extend our appreciation to Juliana Tullues for proofreading this document.

Not least, Save the Children is extremely grateful to all the children, individuals and organisations for kindly agreeing to include their case histories in this publication to add insight and meaning.

Save the Children UK, Mongolia Programme  
Ulaanbaatar, August 2009



## ACRONYMS

APDC	Association of Parents with Disabled Children
BPS	British Partnership Scheme
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPCAN	Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CSD	Centre for Social Development
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Aid Office
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
FDG	Fondation Dufresne et Gauthier
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IAMD	Institute of Administration and Management Development
MCRC	Mongolian Child Rights Center
MGEC	Mongolian Gender Equality Center
MOSTEC	Ministry of Science, Technology, Education and Culture
MOESC	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
MSWL	Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor
NAC	National Authority for Children
NCAV	National Center Against Violence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPAP	National Poverty Alleviation Programme
NPDPCC	National Programme of Action for the Development and Protection of Children
NPPS	National Programme for Preschool Strengthening
PAPO	Poverty Alleviation Programme Office
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
SC	Save the Children
SC UK	Save the Children UK
SPU	State Pedagogical University
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank
WVI	World Vision International

## GLOSSARY

Aimag	Province
Bagh	Administrative unit below soum
GBP	Great Britain Pounds
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Ger	Traditional Mongolian dwelling
Khoroo	Administrative unit lower than a district level in Ulaanbaatar
MNT	Mongolian currency
Soum	Administrative unit lower than aimag (province)
USD	United States Dollars



## INTRODUCTION

Save the Children UK is a worldwide independent children's rights organisation established in 1919. It is Save the Children UK's great pride that its founder, Eglantyne Jebb, first promoted the idea of children's rights, and drafted the first declaration for children's rights that was adopted by the League of Nations<sup>1</sup> in 1924, making Save the Children the first children's rights agency in the world. This declaration evolved into the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), adopted in 1989, and is now the most widely ratified rights convention in the world. The principles, rights and responsibilities set out in the UNCRC provide the key framework for Save the Children's work.

Save the Children UK has been working in Mongolia since 1994 to support Mongolian children's development and wellbeing, with particular focus on the country's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

A Cooperation Agreement between Save the Children UK (then known as the Save the Children Fund) and the Government of Mongolia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was signed as a result of Her Royal Highness the Princess Anne Elizabeth Alice Louise's official visit to Mongolia in August 1993. Save the Children's country office was opened in Ulaanbaatar in February 1994, with its first Programme Director, John Beauclerk, and only three local staff members.

Since then, Save the Children UK's Mongolia Programme has grown significantly, employing at one time, a competent team of 80 staff members working at its two offices and seven community-based centres. Save the Children has strategically expanded its programme's scope, shaped its programming approaches and successfully mobilised the human and financial resources required. Save the Children has now become the most recognised child rights' organisation in the country as a result of its years of productive partnerships with a wide range of Government and non-government associates, communities and children.

After 15 years of endeavours, this is a time to look back on Save the Children's experiences, achievements and contributions to bring about significant and positive changes to Mongolian children's lives. Through this memoir, Save the Children hopes to provide a brief but insightful record of its experiences and achievements in Mongolia.

### Save the Children's Vision

We look forward to a world which respects and values each child, which listens to children and learns, and where all children have hope and opportunity.

### Save the Children's Mission

Save the Children fights for children's rights; we deliver immediate and lasting improvement to children's lives worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup> The League of Nations (1919-1946), the UN's predecessor, was formed "to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security" throughout the world



# DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT IN WHICH SAVE THE CHILDREN STARTED ITS WORK



## DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT IN WHICH SAVE THE CHILDREN STARTED ITS WORK

The country's context during the mid-90s, at the time Save the Children UK started its operations in Mongolia, was rather difficult.<sup>2</sup> It was a time when Mongolia, after decades with a centrally planned economy, embarked on an ambitious economic reform programme and transition to a market economy. Break-up with the Soviet Union led to both the loss of subsidies worth one-third of its GDP and the disruption of traditional COMECON<sup>3</sup> trade relations. Mongolia's economy declined during four consecutive years between 1989 and 1994. Real wages halved between 1992 and 1993 and fell by a further third in 1993. Inflation accelerated, reaching over 300% in 1993.

Mongolia's Government adopted structural adjustment policies centred on privatising State-owned assets, liberalising trade, reducing or eliminating subsidies and on retrenchments in Government and associated services. Government social policies had largely been dictated by the need for structural adjustments and the lack of available funds.

At the time of Save the Children's arrival in Mongolia, social costs associated with the economic and fiscal crisis and the transition towards a market economy had become increasingly apparent. The incidence of poverty and unemployment, virtually non-existent prior to 1990, was increasing rapidly. As at 1995, 36.3% of the population was living in poverty.<sup>4</sup> Structural unemployment and reductions in health, education, social services and infrastructure investment had left Mongolia with a large and persistent poverty problem and a marked decline in key social development indicators.

The country's health system was hardly coping with sharply deteriorating conditions in both urban and rural areas, and maternal mortality rates doubled between 1991 and 1993.

Drop-out and non-enrolment at primary and secondary schools, negligible before 1991, had become a serious problem in poor and pastoral aimags and in major cities. With the withdrawal of food subsidies for herders' children living in school dormitories, a large number of boarding schools were closed. Enrolment of borders in 1992 was only half of that in 1989, resulting in a high number of school drop-outs. Between 1990 and 1995 alone, the number of kindergartens went down from 909 to 660 and kindergarten enrolments dropped from 27.9% to 18.8%.<sup>5</sup>



The collapse of day-care, child-care and school services made gainful employment for many mothers impossible, and placed severe constraints on family life. The number of orphans, abandoned children and street children was increasing. Non-existent in 1989, the number of street children was estimated at between 1,500 and 4,000 by the mid-90s. The growing incidence of violence against children was largely attributed to excessive alcohol abuse, to family breakdowns and to the psychological pressures of unemployment on men.

<sup>2</sup> Country Situation Analysis conducted in 1994 for the SC Mongolia Country Strategy, 1995-2000

<sup>3</sup> The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), 1949-1991, was an economic organisation of socialist countries

<sup>4</sup> Living standard measurement survey 1995 conducted by the National Statistical Office with WB support

<sup>5</sup> Mongolia's Education for All Assessment, 2000

## STRATEGIC ISSUES IDENTIFIED



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Assessments of Vulnerable Groups in Mongolia, undertaken by Save the Children's regional office in 1993 for the World Bank, and other analysis (1994) recommended the following strategic issues for Save the Children's new country programme in Mongolia:

**Priority focus on vulnerable children:**

Although a large section of Mongolian society was suffering acutely from the effects of transition, children were among the most vulnerable. Acute problems faced by children were directly attributed to the radical disruption of a formerly well-ordered society with a comprehensive child-care system. Almost all child-focused services and institutions were in crisis both in financial and conceptual terms. Save the Children therefore focused its priority attention on children's specific needs.

**Poverty alleviation:** At this time, the new phenomenon of widespread poverty at household levels was a major cause of distress for Mongolian children. Although alleviating poverty alone would not solve all the problems for vulnerable children in Mongolia's new society, Save the Children believed that greater availability of resources within households would have the most significant impact on children's conditions over the widest area and in the shortest amount of time. Alleviating poverty was, therefore, a key issue for Save the Children and one in which it had a comparative advantage in terms of understanding, partnerships and implementation plans.

**Services' reforms:** Although comprehensive in nature, Mongolia's former child-focused services had not been adapted conceptually or financially to international norms, and to the Mongolian Government's goal to create a market economy. Improving the quality of education, social assistance, and conditions for disabled children and other children in especially

difficult circumstances (such as street children and orphans) required sustained efforts to raise awareness of children's rights and to employ child centred approaches backed by small scale experiments.

**Civil society development:** The sudden withdrawal of Mongolia's comprehensive social, educational and welfare systems made it particularly important to mobilize the population around voluntary and participatory development methods. Gradual adaptation of participatory social-development methods to Mongolia's social systems had enormous potential for the processes of rebuilding the community and empowering its members.



**SAVE THE CHILDREN'S  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WELLBEING  
OF THE CHILDREN IN MONGOLIA**





# SAVE THE CHILDREN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WELLBEING OF THE CHILDREN IN MONGOLIA

## Poverty Alleviation (1994-2000)

Save the Children had an important role in raising awareness of children's special vulnerability within the wider National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP, 1996-2000).

Save the Children's involvement in the NPAP was a highly strategic choice made necessary by the need to extract the most benefit for children. With its then limited financial capacity, Save the Children was unable to adequately address even in part the many challenges presented for children by the country's transition. It meant Save the Children needing to exert pressure on larger donors to take the children's agenda and needs into account.

With support from its regional office, Save the Children's involvement and contribution to the NPAP developed rapidly. With active involvement in designing NPAP management structures at central and aimag levels, Save the Children successfully promoted more decentralised approaches to implementing the programme. Save the Children's input corrected NPAP's originally weak focus on children, with preschool being included as a priority NPAP issue.

*Photo below: A contract is signed between SC UK, the British Embassy in Mongolia, MOSTEC, and PAPO to establish the preschool window under the NPAP's Local Development Fund, 7 July 1997.*



With Save the Children initiatives and financial commitments, a preSave the Children school window was established under the NPAP's Local Development Fund (LDF) to disburse financing required to support local action for preSave the Children school education.

Save the Children's social development and capacity-building initiatives were highly instrumental in imparting social-development skills at aimag and soum levels and for NPAP implementers. By using an institutional building approach, Save the Children strategically invested in a partnership with a local consulting agency, resulting in the establishment of a Centre for Social Development (CSD) within the Institute of Administration and Management Development (IAMD). This CSD later became Save the Children's principal partner in its efforts for social development and capacity building. Save the Children-CSD's social development and capacity-building training, conducted nationwide, had an important role to ensure that the NPAP implementation was truly participatory, and to empower local communities by increasing their participation in decision making.

This bottom-up approach to development by promoting community participation and community development was new to the country. Therefore, it was not an easy task to convince local Government officials and communities themselves of the importance and power of community participation in local development decision-making processes and in training aimag and soum level officials to promote genuine community participation in planning, implementing and monitoring local poverty alleviation activities.

From the left:  
John Beauclerk, Save the Children UK Programme Director; John Durhan, British Ambassador in Mongolia; and Ch. Lkhagvajav, Minister of Science Technology, Education and Culture

The successful use of this bottom-up, participatory approach to assess local communities' needs, action planning and decision making in the Livestock Restocking Project for poor rural people (Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme in Arkhangai Aimag) was a genuinely empowering experience, not only for relevant local communities but also for SC's trainers and partners, convincing these people of the power of community wisdom and local knowledge.

With financial support from the Asian Development Bank, in partnership with the CSD, SC provided technical assistance to strengthen the NPAP, namely to design and roll out the NPAP's Targeted Assistance Fund, and to design, pilot and roll out a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) System for the NPAP.

As a result, the targeted, decentralised social assistance fund was designed and established for the first time in Mongolia to provide financial assistance for its ultra-poor in order to help them to meet their basic needs. Relevant officials were trained nationwide on how to manage and distribute such assistance to the poor. Originally planned in the NPAP project document approved in 1994, this fund had not been established until late-1996 due to the absence of a clear policy framework on targeted social assistance.

Further technical assistance resulted in developing and rolling out the entire NPAP Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation System, as well as capacity building for relevant officials and communities nationwide in participatory monitoring and evaluation. As a concept, project monitoring and evaluation was itself new in the country, and making this process participatory was even more challenging. However, this lengthy 2-year process successfully built a strong foundation to promote participatory approaches in local community development and, later, the PM&E system's participatory principles were adopted for the Sustainable Livelihood Programme – the NPAP's successor.

To complement its involvement in the NPAP mentioned above, SC initiated various pilot projects to support specific vulnerable groups found to have been inadequately supported



*R.Gantumur, CSD researcher, consults with rural community people, Arkhangai aimag, 1996*

by the NPAP. These included female-headed households with many children and rural herder families. Using the NPAP's existing implementation mechanisms, SC supported 250 female-headed households with many children in the Umnogovi, Sukhbaatar, Dornod and Darkhan-uul Aimags by providing micro-credit for income generating start-up activities, to support children's enrolment at kindergartens and schools. In total, 450 poor herder families in the Bayan-ulgii, Khuvsgol, Bayankhongor and Dornod Aimags were supported with livestock restocking grants on condition that their children regularly attend schools. By successfully implementing these projects, SC demonstrated the value of community participation and local ownership in project designing, planning and implementation. It also confirmed the need, relevance and benefit of livestock restocking efforts to successfully reduce poverty and uplift the rural poor, and local NPAP implementers gained the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to initiate and manage livestock restocking projects. Convinced by the above success and starting in 2000, the NPAP allocated USD 1.3 million to support poor herder families at 33 soums in 5 aimags.

## Developing Social Work Profession (1994-2002)

From the very beginning of its operations in Mongolia, Save the Children had established a strong partnership with the National Children's Centre (NCC), given the NCC's unique status as a possible champion of children's rights in Mongolia. With its better understanding of the country's situation, key players and their commitments to the wellbeing of Mongolian children, Save the Children's cooperation with the NCC soon developed into a far more strategic and long-term partnership.

Based on a needs assessment conducted by Save the Children's regional social development advisor, by June 1994, Save the Children had embarked on an ambitious attempt to prepare NCC children's workers as the first cadre of community development agents in Mongolia. In the absence of either an effective NGO network or professional social workers, children's workers had taken the lead in addressing critical transitional issues, such as, poverty, malnutrition, disability, street and working children, etc.

As most of these problems were entirely new to Mongolia, children's workers, despite being highly motivated, were poorly placed to plan and implement remedial activities. Therefore, a training programme "Child-focused Development" was designed to introduce the UNCRC and community development concepts to local government children's workers,



Local trainees on "Child-focused Development",  
Hovd Aimag, 1995

both rural and urban, by using participatory training methods. Regularly enhanced by social development concepts and practical experience in Mongolia, this training programme was provided for more than 500 children's workers, as well as for social policy officers nationwide (1994-1996) to meet the new demand of their roles; and this training was later extended to school methodologists.

While Save the Children responded to immediate training needs for officials working with children, it was increasingly recognized that more systematic and sustainable training methods would be needed to appropriately prepare skilled professionals to deal with various social issues faced by Mongolia's children. This led to a needs assessment for social work services and exploratory analysis of potential options to train professional social workers, conducted by the CSD and local researchers. The analysis' findings were then carefully extrapolated through national and international consultative seminars (1996 -1997) with active participation by international and local academics, researchers and practitioners. This intensive consultative process resulted in the conclusion that social work to be developed in Mongolia should be social-development oriented. With Save the Children's technical and financial assistance, the Social Work Resource Centre at the then State Pedagogical University (SPU) was established in 1997 and this was later successfully developed as the country's first Social Work Department to prepare professional social workers.

Save the Children directed its strategies to building the capacities of, and enabling local academics, teachers and practitioners to define the nature of social work relevant to the country's needs and in its context; and to pilot and develop social work practice models to be used in the education, social welfare and child protection sectors. While started the social work Bachelor's Degree programme in 1997 at SPU jointly with the NCC, Save the Children



initiated in partnership with the Mongolian Child Rights Centre (MCRC) its school social work pilot projects to prevent school drop-outs at both rural and urban schools.

With SC and MCRC support, a school social work unit was established by MOSTEC at the Primary and Secondary Education Policy and Coordination Department, to support implementing school social work model development projects, and to promote awareness of the need to build school social work services. By the time the very first social workers graduated in 2001, a Government decision had been made to establish school social worker positions at all schools across the country. At the same time, SC initiated and supported establishing social work training and research centres at the SPU Teachers' College in Dornod Aimag, and at the Mongolian State University's local branch in Hovd Aimag. SPU's very first group of social work graduates were invited to work at these centres. These centres later became social work departments, well recognised for their unique role in developing and supporting local knowledge and practice in social work through in-service and pre-service training and other local capacity-building activities.

The true inspirational experience was that SC's efforts had started with short-term training for children's workers but resulted in establishing professional social work education programmes at higher education institutions. The roles of this new profession and its professionals are now well understood by society, and professional social work services are now legally required in education, child protection, welfare and other social service areas. As at 2009, 16 higher education institutions offer social work Bachelor, Master and PhD Degree programmes, with more than 1,200 professional social workers providing services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities across the country.

An independent project evaluation conducted for the SC social work project (1997-2002) congratulated SC and its partners on its outstanding achievement in developing the

new social work profession in Mongolia, and recommended potentially replicating this in other countries in the region. SC proudly shares these achievements with a large number of local players, especially the NCC, city and aimag Children's Centres, CSD, SPU, the Social Work Resource Centre and its Programme Committee, MOSTEC, MSWL, aimag Education and Culture Departments, Ulaanbaatar City Government, Ulaanbaatar City Education Department, MCRC, the Mongolian Association of School Social Workers, National Centre Against Violence (NCAV) and its local branches, Dornod Teachers' College, Hovd branch of the Mongolian State University and all the school social workers who made their distinctive contributions to ensure that SC's school social work pilot projects were successful in Ulaanbaatar City, and Dornod, Uvorkhangai, Selenge and Tuv Aimags. The inspiration, professionalism and commitment of SC's Directors and programme staff were remarkable in making the whole process so successful. Today, SC takes great pride in witnessing the reality of the strong local professional capacity that is undoubtedly promising to advance social work as a profession, as well as its impact on the most vulnerable.



“...Working in partnership with Save the Children was indeed an empowering and rewarding process for all of us. Save the Children was very good at promoting participation, elaborating on and supporting our initiatives, and building our step-by-step achievements. With Save the Children’s support, we were able to obtain year-long, in-country international advisory support, and to learn from social work education development policies and practices in the USA, UK, Russia, India, Japan and Hong Kong. Exposure to and learning from various countries’ experiences in developing social work had an eye-opening effect, helping us to grasp the very real need to develop our own social work, relevant and responsive in the unique context of Mongolia. Besides teaching, we were also able to work at and connect to various Save the Children grassroots projects. These initial exposures not only enhanced our practical experiences but also contributed to building public awareness about this newly emerging profession.

Since its establishment in 1997, the Social Work Department has prepared 190 Bachelors’ Degree social workers, 34 with Masters’ Degrees and has trained 1,500 practitioners through its short-term in-service training programmes. Many of the Department’s graduates now work at government and non-government organisations in various fields, such as, education, child protection and welfare, as well as heading professional social work associations. Some of these also lecture on social work at universities and colleges. Today, this Department is well recognized, not only in Mongolia but also beyond, and it is a member of the International Federation of Social Work Schools.

Save the Children’s role in introducing social work as a new profession in the country and in building up the very foundations for its development to the current level is invaluable and unforgettable. We, in the Social Work Department, are very proud to have been able to inherit Save the Children’s truly participatory way of working with its partners to gain the best results from their joint efforts...”

*T.Tsendsuren, Head, Social Work Department, University of Education*

*Kh.Ulziitungalag, Senior Faculty, Social Work Department, University of Education*



*The first school social workers (A.Batkishig, Save the Children UK Project Officer in the middle), Ulaanbaatar, 1997.*

## Protection and Rehabilitation of Street and Working Children (1994 and onwards)

Unable to cope with the shock caused by the virtual collapse of the country's social safety-net during its transition, at the time of Save the Children's arrival in Mongolia, many families were in crisis and breakdown. This situation literally resulted in a large number of abandoned and homeless children, known locally as, "street" children, in spite of Mongolia's extremely cold climate. These children occupied the underground tunnel network that carried the city's central heating system.

"Street" children belong to a cohort of extremely vulnerable children estimated at 30,000 by SC in 1995 and at 60,000 by UNICEF in 1996. Of these, 1,500 children were on the street full-time and another 3,500 returned home occasionally to deliver earnings from various types of legal and illegal activities, such as sifting rubbish for bottles, cans and bones, hawking on trains, begging, pick-pocketing, prostitution, etc.<sup>6</sup> This clearly indicated the high risk of a dramatic increase in the number of "street" children unless some effective preventive and rehabilitative actions were put in place immediately.

Restricted to the capital between 1991 (when "street" children first appeared) and 1993, this had, by 1995, spread to Mongolia's five major cities and its towns linked by the railway. The movement was reported as nationwide by the NCC, with police even registering children from herder families on the streets of Ulaanbaatar.<sup>7</sup>

Although the only long-term solutions to these new transitional problems were regenerating the country's economy, rapidly increasing jobs for parents, and financing a safety-net for the unemployable, urgent preventative and rehabilitation measures were also clearly required. Given this background, SC responded to the Prime Minister's emergency appeal (December 1996) for "street" children's shelters.

Save the Children focused on both aspects of the problem, prevention and rehabilitation.

Preventative action commenced with its "Working Children" Project (1996) in response to the growing number of children forced to leave school and become engaged in various, sometimes hazardous economic activities to contribute earnings for their family's survival. Many children, especially boys, were carrying heavy loads at black markets, doing shoe shining, car washing, street vending, etc. Through its small projects, SC supported moving "working" children away from the most difficult, hazardous jobs by providing some tools to ease their labours and help with earnings for family survival, offering various educational opportunities, and encouraging children to combine work and studies. Life-skills training provided by SC's adult and peer-group trainers aimed to increase the awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections within the working and street children groups, considering the high-risk environment these children were being exposed to.

A great deal of effort was invested to broaden vocational training opportunities for "working" children, to enable them to acquire new skills thus helping them to earn their living in safer and more productive ways. SC's partnerships with selected vocational education institutions and farmers' associations resulted in 850 adolescents acquiring new vocational skills, as well as consequently securing employment at State and private enterprises.



*Working boys at market*

<sup>6</sup> "Prevention and Rehabilitation of Street Children" SC Project Document, BPS-SC, 1996/97

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

## Case Study on Working Children

“Due to poverty and the sudden increase of in-country migration from rural to urban areas, many children have left school and become engaged in hazardous labour for their family’s survival. Our Working Children Project provided a range of supports for working children to help them develop their self-expression abilities, voice their opinions and work together. This project has given hope to many children.

Altansukh was one of these working children. Engaged in labour at a market at age 8, Altansukh had no chance to go school. With our support, he has been able to attend informal classes and to participate in our “video” project and learn English. He later became a leader at the Mandkha Association set up by these working children themselves.

Altansukh is now a student in Sweden, and while studying, has been actively involved in fund-raising activities for Save the Children Sweden to help children in difficult circumstances.”

*Kh.Munkhnzul, Social Worker, SC  
“Working Children” Project (2001-2003)*

The Mandkha Association for Working Children, established by children in 1999, was one of SC’s active partners in reaching out to “working” children to offer educational and developmental opportunities, and promote their active participation to develop and provide life-skills training for other “working” and “street” children. All SC’s efforts invested in “working” children have undoubtedly helped them to increase their income, stay at home and away from the negative aspects of street life.

Save the Children’s rehabilitation work with “street” children started with providing emergency shelters for 125 “street” children at five self-managed compounds in Ulaanbaatar’s poorer suburbs (1996), and is known as the

“... This was a time when street children faced strong social discrimination, with people avoid passing them nearby. I still remember that it was at first not easy for us to approach them. We went to where the children were, apartment building entrances and underground heating-system manholes, etc., often having our intentions to build real relationships tested by them throwing insects at us from their underground “homes”, intentionally making our clothes dirty, etc. Considerable effort went into gaining their trust and convincing them of our good will....”

*J. Lkhagvasuren, Manager, at a SC Shelter for  
Street Children (1995-2003)*

Besides places for living, children were given medical attention, bathing facilities, clothing, immunization, and educational opportunities. SC’s training for parents, teachers, local government officials, NGO’s staff, and medical personnel, were directed at building greater knowledge of and appropriate responses to the street children phenomenon. During 1997-1998, at the requests of local governments, Save the Children opened further five shelters in the Dornod, Selenge, Tuv and Darkhan-uul Aimags. Save the Children’s shelters, street educators and drop-in services have become service models for “street” children followed by various other international organisations that were then new to Mongolia.

In the absence of an effective national social safety-net, the above activities could only be considered remedial but were intended to address the most urgent needs of street children and staff directly associated with them, and to point the Government of Mongolia in the way of internationally-acceptable and cost-effective preventative and rehabilitation methods to deal with this most visible and acute effect of economic transition.<sup>8</sup>

Although the SC shelters’ initial purpose was to provide emergency accommodation, due

<sup>8</sup> “Prevention and Rehabilitation of Street Children” SC Project Document, BPS-SC, 1996/97

to the absence of other alternative forms of care for children and limited initiatives by the Government, services for “street” children largely remained as SC’s and other international NGO’s responsibility. With prolonged stays by children at these shelters, SC expanded its services beyond meeting these children’s basic needs. As many of these children had previously been engaged in a variety of legal and illegal activities to survive on the streets, a great deal of effort was made to disengage them, especially from illegal activities, by expanding their

educational and developmental opportunities, enrolling them at kindergartens, schools, informal education classes and at vocational training institutions.

While Save the Children’s “street” educators (social work outreach services) worked with children where they were found, its drop-in centres offered various basic services (light meals, showers, play areas, rest, and involvement in various developmental activities) for children who did not want to live at its shelters.

“...I have two children, a girl and a boy. I was never formally married, so I’ve been the only breadwinner for myself and the kids. We moved in to live together with my brother’s family. This was a big problem for his wife and we would argue all the time. So, I spent a lot of time outside the home and could not really care for my kids. I slept in various places at night, worked as a domestic maid, and also did several other jobs to make a bit more money.

I think the lowest point in my life was when I heard that my son had run away and was living on the streets. I wanted to kill myself. I didn’t know where my son was. I could not go home. My daughter was very young and I thought that it would really scare her if she discovered the truth. My daughter still lives with my brothers’ family – she is fine there. The street is no place for her.

I had to pull myself out of this mess. I needed to find my son. I realised that I had to deal with myself first, and then look after my children. I understood this through the counselling I received at Save the Children. My brother said he would rent a place for me, so that I could stop living on the streets and get my life back in order. I have now found my 17-year-old son. I found him through Save the Children’s centre for street children. When he arrived there, they helped him by getting in touch with me. He is now an apprentice at a building site, and will soon be earning quite a bit of money. So, things are looking up for us. Even though my son spent so much time on the streets, he is a good boy. Whatever he earns, he first thinks about spending it on me, and also about buying something for his sister. He does all kinds of jobs – moving luggage, slicing vegetables at food stalls, unloading coal trains. He started doing these things at the age of 12 and now has an apprenticeship thanks to Save the Children. It is a chance to earn a much better income. He has been getting counselling at the Centre as well and I think that has helped him a lot.

I didn’t know much about how to raise kids before. The best thing I learnt at the Save the Children’s Centre is about positive discipline. That is a simple thing and using your affection to show which behaviour you like. If your child is doing his homework, don’t be afraid to kiss him, and show your appreciation. If you want to correct his behaviour, do it politely, and tell him what he did right, as well as what he can do better. Don’t shout at him. But, some parents do shout when things go wrong, and this tends to break down their relationships with their children. Then the children want to rebel, the parents shout more, and things just go from bad to worse. Positive discipline really works, I have tried it, and seen the good results!”

*O, 41, A Single Mother*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Interview conducted by Madhuri Dass, November 2008



“...This is my first job. I have worked here for two years now. I love my job! What I love most about it is to see the change and improvement in children’s lives.

When they first come here, the kids are very tough to deal with. They are rough, misbehave, and don’t trust anyone. This is how they have to be on the streets. We have to be very patient and persistent. In fact, patience always brings results. I find it really works to spend a lot of time meeting and talking to a child, face-to-face. I call them by name. It is important for a kid to begin to trust you. They tell me things in confidence and it stays that way. I also tell them we will tackle whatever issues they are facing, together. And, we do. This is a wonderful feeling for a child; he doesn’t feel all alone like he is on the streets and he is also able to make an improvement in his life.

I pay attention to every need of the child. Then, when he begins to trust me, I let go bit by bit, and help him to build the confidence to do things for himself. Then, I have to find out whether the child is willing to work with us, to find his own family, to try to get back to school, etc. They resist these ideas for a long time if some trouble has driven them away from home – and then you just have to listen to them, and talk to them about going home.

Sometimes, children give us all the details of where their family might be, and ask us to help them find them right away. Some children are really very difficult. They change their stories, are inconsistent, and will not show us that they want to work with us. For instance, they give us false addresses or don’t stand by their commitments.

But all the kids change for the better after they get here. It could simply be that they get a hot meal, a shower, time with other kids at this Centre, or the attention from all of us. I think they just become a little happier.”

*G.Sunjidmaa, Social Worker, SC Child Centre (Drop-in Centre for Street Children) <sup>10</sup>*

<sup>10</sup> Interview conducted by Madhuri Dass, November 2008

A number of innovative projects such “Summer Camp”, “Life-Skills Training”, and fine art projects “Video”, “Social Circus” and “Focus on Kids” have been implemented based on children’s interests and ideas, with extraordinarily positive effects on children’s social and communication skills, innovative and creative thinking, as well as their self-determination and self-confidence.

“... I felt blessed and honoured working with children of Mongolia, thanks to Save the Children’s programmes and the trust of many. First it was a by-chance circus project assignment which sent me to Ulaanbaatar, and then it became a choice.

I am more than attached to the children and the colleagues I’ve been working with in the past nine years. I personally hope to be able to manage to pursue my commitments to the children of Mongolia, and am trying to arrange my life in order to do so.”

*Cecile Truffault  
Trainer for Social Circus Project (2000-2005)  
Volunteer at Community-based Rehabilitation  
Centre, Ulaanbaatar, (2006-2007)*

While working to expand and improve its services for children, Save the Children has continuously invested in capacity building for local government and non-government players dealing with issues confronting “street” and other vulnerable children in Mongolia. Shelters at Selenge and Darkhan-uul have been successfully handed over to local government and non-governmental agencies (2001-2002) with some continuing technical support. Over the years, Save the Children has intensified its work to trace children’s families, establish contacts, assess family situations, and explore ways to reunite families whenever feasible, introduce social work services and other supports for the children and their families. Years of efforts have paid off, with a substantial number of children finding their families, connecting and/or reuniting with them. Some 180 children have been reunited with their families during the period 2003 to 2008.

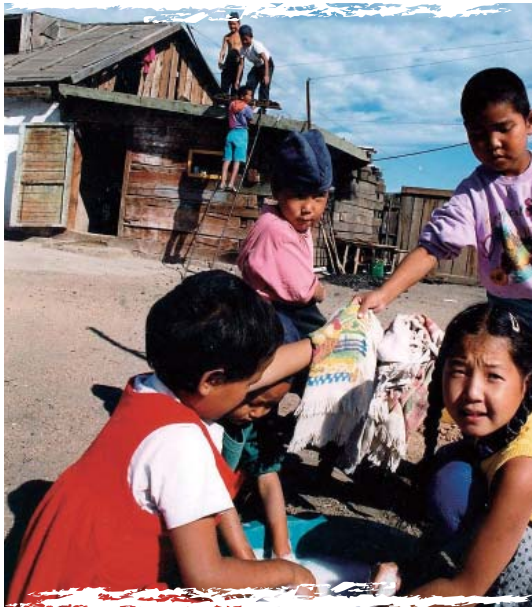
Alternative forms of after-care services, such as, kinship and foster-care, were provided for 18 children whose circumstances did not allow family reunification.



Children at summer camp, Gachuurt (Cecile Truffault, social circus trainer, in the middle), 2003



Social Circus training programme has been implemented successfully since 2000, in order to protect children against violence and health them to understand their rights and lead active lives



Children at shelter, Ulaanbaatar, 1996

Given the fact that, by 2002, a number of local and international organisations were providing shelter-based services for street children, the scope of SC's direct services for street children has gradually been reduced. Based on its international and in-country experience, SC developed service standards for institutional care (2006), and has advocated for the need to officially introduce such benchmarks to set norms and ways to work with children in institutional care to effectively address the risk of uneven-quality services being provided by various agencies. Enhanced and revised by active support from the NAC and UNICEF, these standards were approved in 2008 by the relevant Government authority, for nationwide application. SC intensively promoted its policy on family and community-based care for children, and has spelled out its policy to use institutional care as a "last resort" in 2005.

### Case Study: After-care support

"We (me, my brother and sister) were admitted at the Save the Children shelter in Dornod in 1997, when my father had died and my mother had left us. For years, the shelter was "home" to us and the teachers became our "parents". In 2006, the three of us started living independently. We are so grateful for all that Save the Children has done for us. Save the Children bought us a home to live in and supported us with food and schooling items, for six months. It is now two years that we have been living on our own. During the past two years, our teachers and social workers have helped us a lot to adapt to our new living circumstances, learn to live on our own, spend our money and make appropriate decisions. It was not, and is still not easy to live on our own, but we have tried hard with our teachers. I have finished my schooling and all three of us earn small amounts of money to help us to live decently.

I am very happy that my Mum returned to us a year ago and that we now all live together as a family. I remember that when I lived at the shelter I would not see my Mum because I was always shamed that she lived on the street. Now that issue is gone.

We do still have contact with our teachers and social workers, to whom we are so grateful for their understanding and support."

*N, a 20-year-old man, who used to live at the SC shelter in Dornod*



*E, reunited with his mother after 7 years of living at a SC shelter since they had been accidentally separated in 1999. Ulaanbaatar, 2006*



## Re-establishing Preschool Education (1994-2000)

As at 1994, Save the Children stood alone amongst donors in analyzing the importance of maintaining and, where possible, reforming Mongolia's existing capacity for early childhood development. SC has, however, taken a strategic decision to invest in the country's preschool education sector, given its crucial importance to children's development, in addition to the excellent potential to introduce child-centred education concepts within the framework of early childhood development.

At the initiative of SC, a review of preschool education, with particular reference to vulnerable groups, was commissioned during 1994 by the MOSTEC and the National Children's Centre (NCC). The review findings built the basis for a policy document on "Child-centred Education and Early Childhood Development" that was later converted to the "National Programme for Preschool Strengthening" (NPPS -I), 1995-2000.

Save the Children was the Mongolian Government's principal partner during the programme's entire implementation period to reform the country's preschool system. The reform focused on improving the quality of care and education, access to quality education especially by the most vulnerable children, and affordability of delivering quality education by the State. SC's technical assistance provided a number of in-country and overseas training opportunities for national preschool specialists in regard to child-centred approaches that had an important role to build national stakeholders' capacities to reform the preschool sector. These efforts to promote child-centred approaches to preschool education started during 1996 with SC's pilot projects at two kindergartens in Ulaanbaatar. By 1998, these projects had been expanded beyond the capital, to the Darkhan-uul, Dundgovi and Orhon Aimags. Between 1996 and 1998, in total twenty preschool teachers, principals and professionals received from three weeks to six months training on child-centred approaches, at the Singapore Regional Training

and Resource Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education in Asia.

Save the Children's technical assistance included wide ranging support for MOSTEC's Policy Formulation and Coordination Unit, the Preschool Department at the National Institute for Educational Studies, and the Teachers' Training College. SC's support for and partnership with the Preschool Resource Centre at the School of Education Development entailed providing substantial professional support for preschool teachers and supervisors by developing teaching aids and training materials, organising national, regional and local seminars and training opportunities for preschool managers, teaching staff, etc.

The reform process was wholeheartedly supported by impressive initiatives and participation on the part of local governments, local education boards and professionals, as well as parents and communities. Hundreds of local initiatives were supported via a small-grant scheme established by SC. This particular scheme contributed enormously to promote genuine local initiatives to explore more innovative ways of reaching out to the remotest and most vulnerable children, including children with disabilities, increase parents and community participation in kindergarten affairs, and establish community and kindergarten partnerships.

In addition to the above mentioned supports provided directly by SC via its education programme, other channels were used to increase the scope and effectiveness of its support. As mentioned earlier, a preschool

*Children from herder families at a "ger" kindergarten, which Save the Children have helped to set up in Dornod aimag*



window was established under the NPAP's Local Development Fund to disburse finance required for local activities to support preschool education. Through this mechanism Save the Children supported various innovative initiatives by local kindergartens in the Zavhan, Govi-Altai, Bulgan, Tuv, Hovd and Dundgovi Aimags, where initiatives ranged from repairing existing kindergartens to establishing “ger”<sup>11</sup> and “mobile”<sup>12</sup> kindergartens and other outreach services for Mongolia’s most marginalised children. Subsidised feeding was introduced in addition to half-day (shift) classes being organised where children’s parents were unable to afford the cost of food needed for children to attend regular kindergartens. School preparation classes were also organised, particularly for children about to enter schools for the first time. Community education volunteers were trained to support the then newly-established community kindergartens. These initiatives were later replicated at other locations and soon became a wide-spread practice across the country, known as “alternative forms” to provide preschool education.

The NPPS-I (1995-2000) successes have largely and legitimately been attributed to the firm commitments invested by SC. This programme resulted in significantly increasing awareness at all levels of the importance of preschool education. Preschool education coverage nationwide has been increased by 13.3% by 2000, thanks largely to the widely replicated practice of providing alternative forms of preschool education initiated by Save the Children.



“... Save the Children made invaluable contribution to the development of the country’s preschool education system, by stepping in, during the mid-90s, at the sector’s most critical time. Without Save the Children’s timely interventions at that point, Mongolia would have needed much more time, effort and resources to restore its preschool education system which is of utmost importance to its children’s development, education and wellbeing.”

*T.Tsendsuren, Save the Children, Education Officer (1997-2006)*



<sup>11</sup> Kindergartens established by using traditional Mongolian “ger” dwellings

<sup>12</sup> Instead of bringing children to settled areas, “ger” kindergartens often moved to herder communities to serve their children

## Strengthening Preschool and Primary Education (2000 and onwards)

By 2000, some notable improvements had been recorded in Mongolia's socio-economic situation and the country had recovered from its initial transitional shocks. Although its overall poverty rate remained at approximately the same level, in 1999 Mongolia's Human Development Index had surpassed the 1990 level. Preschool education was well established and the second National Programme for Preschool Strengthening (NPPS -II) had become operational under MOSTEC leadership, as well as some additional international players arriving to support preschool sector development.

In light of the above, while SC continued to invest in preschool capacity building at a national level, its programming approaches for direct support at local levels have been changed. With its new Country Strategies, from 2000 and onwards, SC has worked in a few selected target areas instead of trying to reach children in all aimags acutely affected by the severe shock of transition. Focusing its direct support on fewer locations allowed SC to provide substantially more comprehensive support to upgrade preschool education in target locations.

During the period 2000 to 2005, most of SC's direct supports at local levels were concentrated in the Hovd, Dornod, Bayan-ulgii, Bayankhongor, and Dundgovi Aimags, as well as in some remote capital city districts. SC also strengthened its work to build local capacities to use child-centred methods and to improve children's learning and developmental environments, and supported the establishment of four Aimag Preschool Resource Centres within Aimag Education Boards.

By successfully mobilising both local and international resources, between 2002 and 2008, SC was able to support the construction of fourteen new kindergartens in the country's most remote communities and five community-based rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities in four aimags (Dornod, Hovd, Bayan-ulgii, and Bayankhongor), and the capital.

At a national level, SC furthered its previous years' efforts to pilot and promote providing alternative forms of preschool education for Mongolia's remotest children. During the summer of 2004 alone, 5,200 children attended "ger" kindergartens established with SC support. More emphasis was placed on improving the content and quality of alternative forms of preschool education delivery by commissioning an assessment of "ger" kindergartens with consequent supporting follow-up actions by relevant local players. Specific focus was on piloting appropriate multi-grade teaching methods and developing high-quality resource materials for learning and teaching, including training programmes for mobile teachers. Significant expansion and progress has been made in SC's efforts to integrate children with disabilities into mainstream education by implementing a sub-programme specifically focused on this issue, and bringing the best local expertise into its education team. SC's partnerships with communities, the State and non-State players, such as, the Preschool Education School, Academy of Management, Mongolian Education Alliance, and Association of Parents with Disabled Children were strengthened significantly.

The importance of the continuity of preschool into primary school education, and the fact that most class repetitions occur at primary school levels, led SC to expand its education programmes beyond the preschool level.



“...The Education for Herder Children Project (2003-2006) started with a herder children’s forum jointly organised in Dornod in 2003 by Save the Children and local government agencies. It was alarming that a vast number of herder children had left school at primary levels, as well as many never having experienced going to school. Many children from poor families were employed by other families to herd their livestock in exchange for food, clothing and material supplies for their families. The priority need identified by children at this Forum was “an education”.

In 2004, Save the Children selected two soums (Tsgaan-Ovoo and Matad) with the highest number of drop-outs, for its intervention project in which three ten-day rounds of non-formal education classes were organised during regular school breaks so as to use school and dormitory facilities temporarily freed up. Targeted children living far from the soum centres where these non-formal classes had been organised received invitation letters from the soum governments and Save the Children. It was amazing to find that 90% of the children invited managed to attend the first round of classes. During their stays at the soum centres, besides the non-formal classes, the schools had organised various events and entertainment, and the soum governors met the children personally and arranged guided tours to visit the main organisations in the area (local government offices, schools, clinics, etc.), providing exciting new experiences for many rural children who had never before visited such places. Some of those children later became peer trainers.

Based on this first years’ experiences, during 2004-2006 local education authorities extended the project to a further seven soums. In total 400 children, who had dropped out of school, or had never been enrolled, acquired primary-level educations, many moving on from non-formal education to regular schools. The project was successful, not only in terms of increasing learning opportunities for nomadic herder children, but also in terms of increasing local education officials’ roles for educating children left outside the formal education system.

*B.Erdenechimeg, SC Dornod Field Coordinator (2003-2007)*

Save the Children’s “Quality Basic Education” Project (2006-2009) was implemented in the context of Mongolia’s national school system restructured from a ten- to a twelve-year system. The school-entry age was officially lowered from eight to seven starting in the 2005-2006 school year, with plans to be lowered further, from seven to six in the 2008-2009 school year. These younger children entering school at ages seven and six brought new demands for both parents and teachers at pre- and primary school levels; and the “Quality Basic Education” Project was, therefore, well-timed support to increase the most disadvantaged children’s access to quality pre- and primary education, and to improve parents’ roles and participation, as well as that of communities and civil society, in preschool education services and management.



*The provision of teaching materials, age-appropriate toys and other learning tools was also increased significantly with SC support (2007).*

The “Quality Basic Education” Project was a very successful resource mobilisation, resulting in € 1.3 million (MNT 2.1 billion) financial resources being channelled to strengthen national and local capacities to improve access to and the quality of pre-and primary education for Mongolia’s most vulnerable children groups. While directly supporting pre and primary education at six Aimags (Bayankhongor, Zavhan, Hovd, Khuvsgol, Selenge, Dornod and Sukhbaatar) and two Ulaanbaatar Districts (Chingeltei and Khan-uul) at a national level, SC also supported education planning, management and capacity-building efforts. SC supported developing the Preschool Education Law (passed in 2008) and developed (draft) standards for alternative forms of preschool education within the project’s framework. Applying these standards countrywide will introduce benchmark requirements for alternative forms of preschool education, thereby positively affecting its quality and will, furthermore, facilitate State Budget allocation for alternative forms of preschool education. Successful pilot training for mobile

teachers, using the newly-developed training modules for alternative forms of preschool education for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds, were organised and within a two year period, 2,000 children from herder families received training from mobile teachers, and 500 children were enrolled at kindergartens newly-built by SC.

Save the Children made valuable contributions to improve preschool and primary education policy frameworks by commissioning research studies with explicit focus on the continuity of pre- and primary education, the assessment of grades 1 and 2 textbooks, and child-centred teaching methods.

By providing age-appropriate toys and learning tools valued at MNT 131.5 million, preschool children’s learning environments have been improved dramatically, benefiting more than 7,000 children at 96 kindergartens in targeted locations.



## Support to Education of Children with Disabilities (1998 and onwards)

As at 1997, except for a small number of children enrolled at two kindergartens and five schools catering for children with special needs, Mongolia's children with disabilities had hardly any access to education. SC's efforts, from 1998 and onwards, to open and broaden preschool education opportunities for socially marginalised children with disabilities, have built firm foundations to promote and implement an inclusive education policy throughout the country. Building on its solid experience in preschool sector, SC's efforts to mainstream children with disabilities started at preschool levels and later expanded to primary and secondary schools.

Starting in 1998 with small pilot projects in Ulaanbaatar, Arkhangai and Bulgan Aimags, SC's integrated education project has become a fast-growing part of its education programme. In a space of four years time, between 2002 and 2006, the number of disabled children successfully integrated into mainstream education institutions, with SC support, had been increased from 1,000 to 8,000. DANIDA's past initiatives to integrate education at selected aimags had provided valuable foundations on which SC was able to build successfully.

The main areas for SC's interventions included, building public awareness and teaching capacities, promoting community-based rehabilitation practices, and improving the policy and legal framework to promote inclusive education principles throughout the country. With SC's consistent support, a large number of parents, local communities, kindergartens and schools took actions against the social stigma and discrimination encountered by children with disabilities. Parents took an increasing role to build public awareness to overcome prejudice and, often, rejection. SC also provided a platform for learning from relevant international experiences by organising study tours abroad and hosting an international seminar on

inclusive education in Mongolia. SC's support in organising training for kindergarten teachers and principals was supplemented with technical assistance to develop practical guidance, training modules and other educational resource materials, in order to integrate children with disabilities into the country's mainstream education system.

Save the Children's technical and financial support to set up and partner with the Integrated Education Unit at MOSTEC opened new avenues to promote a policy framework for inclusive education and its inclusion in relevant Government policies and practices. With approval of the Inclusive Education Programme for Disabled Children (December 2003), integrating children with disabilities into mainstream kindergartens and schools became an official Government policy. Although Mongolia has a long way to go for its full realisation, having a policy framework was a remarkable step to promote inclusive education principles in the country.



Hearing and mobility aids and other equipment provided by SC has facilitated positive social integration and education for hundreds of children with disabilities. Local community-based rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities, set up by SC in the Dornod, Hovd, Bayankhongor and Bayan-ulgii Aimags and in Ulaanbaatar, have had tremendous positive effects on these children, their families and communities. The National Rehabilitation Centre for disabled children that SC helped to establish at Ulaanbaatar's Kindergarten #10, is to serve the same purpose. With support from SC, entrances at 69 schools and 13 kindergartens throughout Mongolia have been rebuilt to ensure physical accessibility for children with disabilities.

Save the Children's long-standing partnerships with parents of children with disabilities have resulted in enormously empowering the parents who, themselves, have set up the Association of Parents with Disabled Children (APDC) in 2002. SC is extremely proud that its institutional capacity-building efforts have contributed to the fact that APDC has become one of Mongolia's most active civil society players for the rights of children with disabilities, with its 14 local branches and 4,000 member parents across the country.

*A, is a 5 year-old girl who has been attending SC's Community-Based Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children for nearly a year. Before coming to the Centre, she could not walk. Today she can walk and run like other children. The Centre staff has also helped A's family to get civil registration documents for A and her brother so they could be enrolled in kindergarten.*



*G, aged 14, can only grab things with her feet. Her teacher taught her to use her feet for her daily life and educational activities. She can now write, draw and play a musical instrument with her feet. She can stay alone at home independently while her grandparents are away at work. SC, in Dornod, has been supporting her teacher to provide home-based education for 15 children with severe disabilities, and to train two other teachers to work with these children.*

### Case Study: Working with Children with Disabilities, Dornod

As at 2003, no reliable Dornod statistics were available in regard to children with disabilities. Initiatives by local parents (APDC) to identify children with disabilities, often hidden or bound at their homes, revealed 900 such children living at the Aimag center alone, presenting a huge demand for rehabilitation services for these children.

Strong commitment from parents, local government and SC made it possible to open the new Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children (May 2003) at the Regional Health Diagnostic Centre. The APDC placed at this Centre thus had closer contacts with children, their parents, as well as medical professionals. After half a year of serving physically disabled children, we started to see positive results. A 3-year-old girl who had been tied to a “box” as she was unable to walk, took her the very first steps. Children and parents from other soums started coming to the Centre for its rehabilitation services.

In view of the considerable difficulties faced by many families to bring their children to the service centre, a group of home trainers (15 mothers) paired with professional nurses, was set up and prepared to make regular home visits in order to train and advise parents on at-home care and rehabilitation for their children. Due to this effective out-reach service, the parents of mentally handicapped children requested similar services for their children. Five teachers experienced in working with disabled children were selected and trained to work as “home teachers”. These “home teachers” worked with home-bound children but also with children attending the Centre. Local government’s continuous commitment and support has played a key role.

This Centre has become a loving place for both children and their parents where they not only have access to rehabilitation services, but also opportunities to socialise, play, learn and develop. Since its establishment, the Centre has served 605 children with disabilities, making their lives brighter and happier. It was always so pleasing and rewarding for us to see our interventions being well sustained with great enthusiasm and tireless efforts by local people.

*B. Erdenechimeg, SC Dornod Field Coordinator (2003-2007)*





## Support to Education of Children of Ethnic Minorities (1998 and onwards)

Education of Kazakh children, constituting 5% of Mongolia's child population, has always received specific focus in SC's programming. Bayan-ulgii, the Aimag where the Kazakh people live, performs poorly according to basic indicators for education access and attainment, also has the highest drop-out rate.

During 1998-2000, SC's community based projects in Bayan-ulgii supported income generating activities for poor households with many children, enabling them to afford their children's attendance at schools and kindergartens. Training and capacity-building events, such as, study tours to visit Ulaanbaatar's best kindergartens, were organised specifically for Bayan-ulgii kindergarten teachers. Responding to the fact that Bayan-ulgii had the lowest preschool coverage in the country, during 2002 alone, 30 "ger" kindergartens have been established at this Aimag with SC support. With SC's support, the Kazakh Alphabet Textbook was developed, printed and distributed during 2003 for the first time in Mongolia, to fully meet the demand for this very important textbook.

SC's study "Education of Kazakh children: A Situation Analysis" (2006) drew attention to the absence of an appropriate bilingual education system in Mongolia, placing Kazakh children at a notable disadvantage. As a follow-up to the study findings, in 2007 SC invested further to increase access to and quality of pre- and primary education for Kazakh children, and facilitated developing the first Mongolian language textbooks as a second language, specifically designed for Kazakh children. In total, 9,900 textbooks, for grades 2, 3 and 5, have to date been printed and distributed to facilitate Kazakh children's learning of the Mongolian language.

The study report also provided an alternative to the Government of Mongolia's report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. As a result, in 2006, the

Committee recommended that the Government of Mongolia "facilitate the participation of ethnic minorities in the elaboration of cultural and educational policies that will enable persons belonging to minorities to learn or to have instruction in their mother tongue, as well as in the official language." A four-year, Programme to Support Kazakh Children's Education (2008-2012) was consequently developed with SC's support and approved by MESC. The programme set forth specific objectives, such as, to conduct a comprehensive review of the training curricula and content used at Kazakh schools and, consequently, to revise and develop bilingual learning and teaching methodologies; to increase the provision of textbooks, learning tools and other equipment that are relevant to the needs of Kazakh children; and to enhance the education system so that services are inclusive of and relevant to Kazakh children.



*Kazakh children at kindergarten*

## Support for a Rights-based Education System (2005 and onwards)

Save the Children's approaches to quality education had evolved over the years with increased recognition of the importance of providing a protective environment for children's overall learning and development. Research findings indicated the frequent practice of schools and kindergartens serving as places of discrimination, violence, emotional and economic pressures for children. One in every four school-going children confirmed that their teachers use corporal punishment, and it is a widespread practice for schools to impose various unofficial fees.<sup>13</sup>

Save the Children's review of the Education Law from a children's rights perspective (2005), highlighted the need for Mongolia's education system to acknowledge the rights of every child to learning, set up a favourable and protective environment where all children can exercise their full rights, and promote children's and civic participation in education and its applied authority, as well as that the main duty bearers' responsibilities be clear and transparent to the public. Save the Children therefore initiated and led a year-long nationwide campaign together with a "Child Rights and Education" coalition of 21 local and international organisations. As a result, amendments proposed were passed by the Parliament of Mongolia in December 2006. Altogether 20 specific provisions were changed and newly introduced in this Law, including provisions to ban all forms of abuse, violence, and corporal punishment in education settings, eliminate discrimination, abolish unofficial fee collection at schools, introduce a code of conduct for teachers, and promote children's rights to participation. These amendments also included holding local governments and education authorities responsible to provide education for all children in their respective areas, as well as specific responsibility to create learning environments suitable for ethnic minority-group children. State Budget allocations per student enrolled was introduced

for the first time, for primary and secondary education delivery through non-formal training programmes. It was a remarkable step to ensure equal access to education for disadvantaged children unable to access formal education.

Save the Children has proudly shared these achievements with the "Children's Rights and Education" alliance, "Parliament Lobby Group for Children's Development and Protection", mass media organisations actively involved in its media campaigns, and particularly with parents and teachers continuously engaged in and contributing at public debates and to media coverage. These achievements are equally attributed to children who made invaluable and unique contributions to the process by voicing the realities and difficulties they face, by their active involvement in SC's research, public and mass media debates, and specific events, such as, live talk-shows and written essay events. And, surely, none of this would have been accomplished without enormous inspiration and outstanding commitment from every staff member on SC Mongolia team.

*A meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and his Advisor on SC proposed amendments to the Law on Education, Government House (2006).*



From right to left: M.Enkhsaikhan, Deputy Prime Minister  
 B.Javzankhuu, Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister  
 Kh.Temuujin, Lawyer  
 D.Amaraa, Save the Children UK Programme Officer  
 Ch.Tungalag, Country Director Save the Children UK Mongolia

<sup>13</sup> "Corporal Punishment of Children: Views of Children at Some Schools, Kindergartens and Institutions", Save the Children UK and Gender Centre for Sustainable Development, 2005

Save the Children's subsequent thematic education programme plan (2007 and onwards) focused largely on implementing the Law on Education to support the development of Mongolia's education system in line with children's rights. SC's education programme aims to significantly improve access to and quality of pre- and primary education. SC has increased its interventions to develop bilingual education and follow-up advocacy to the Government for systematic application; enhance child-centred teaching and learning methods; promote children's participation and create a protective learning environment in educational settings; and create a system where teachers can receive support to learn about 'positive disciplining'. Concrete actions have also been taken to increase public awareness of the amendments and civil society's participation to monitor implementation of the Law on Education.

Save the Children's more recent education projects focused on promoting an educational

environment free from violence, and support in non-violent upbringing for students. Educational and awareness-building actions are taken by SC, directed at the general public and education sector officials (school administrators and teachers), to enable them to work in conformity with this Law and to use non-violent methods to work with children. SC also actively promotes participation by parents and children in school affairs. SC aims to advocate for and support the processes so that the curricula on pre-service training for teachers promotes more positive upbringing methods for working with children, and state education and health inspection officials acquire appropriate competence to effectively inspect school governance.

Save the Children believes that the above mentioned processes it has initiated within education legislation and policies, and more importantly, their full realisation, will bring long-lasting changes for all children in Mongolia.



## Emergency Responses during Difficult Times

Save the Children was founded in 1919 in the aftermath of World War One to provide assistance for young war survivors in Europe. Therefore providing emergency relief for populations most affected by natural and man-made disasters has always been an important part of its global work. In Mongolia, although emergency responses did not constitute a significant part of SC's work in the country, it provided emergency relief support during the most difficult times.

Save the Children was involved in three emergency responses during 2000-2001, when Mongolia had been struck by two consecutive winter dzud.<sup>14</sup> Mongolia's 1999-2000 dzud directly affected 450,000 herders (one-fifth of its total population), killing approximately 3 million head of livestock (approximately 10% of its total livestock heads).<sup>15</sup>

In April 2000, after conducting nutritional assessments for children and women of child bearing age in the Bayankhongor Aimag, SC implemented a four-month emergency aid programme at the six soums most badly affected. With financial support from ECHO, SC provided food aid for 420 vulnerable households, food supplements and vitamins for 3,000 children

under 5 and 2,000 pregnant women, food aid plus vegetable seeds and support to build green houses at local institutions, such as, school dormitories, kindergartens and hospitals. The total value of aid provided amounted to MNT 187 million.<sup>16</sup>

Save the Children's 2001 emergency project at 3 soums in the Hovd Aimag included a number of components, such as livestock feeds, food aid for vulnerable families, as well as support for school dormitories, kindergartens and hospitals. Using the country's learning from the previous year's dzud, rapid responses were required to distribute livestock feeds to ensure maximum impact on saving livestock lives. With financial support from the DFID and the UK's Brooke Hospital for Animals, in total 115 tonne of livestock feed was provided for 856 households and 227 tonne of food aid was distributed to 699 poor households. A further 14 tonne of food aid, 76 truckloads of coal and firewood, together with 1,540 blankets, bed sheets and mattresses, were provided for 12 rural school dormitories, kindergartens and hospitals.<sup>17</sup>

In Dornod, following the 2001 outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, and the declaration of a state of quarantine, SC implemented a MNT



*Herder family at the time of dzud, Dundgovi, 2003*

<sup>14</sup> Dzud is a Mongolia-specific winter disaster which undermines the welfare and food security of herder communities by large-scale deaths and debilitation of livestock

<sup>15</sup> "Mongolia winter disaster – dzud", UN and Government of Mongolia, Appeal for International Assistance, 30 January 2001

<sup>16</sup> Save the Children UK Emergency Project in Bayankhongor, Apr-Aug 2000, Project report

<sup>17</sup> Save the Children UK Emergency Project in Hovd, Feb-May 2001, Project report

10.3 million emergency response project. Save the Children provided food aid for 310 poor households and school dormitories, as well as disinfectants and hygiene materials for 950 households, also supporting an information campaign through the local media. Shelter and other necessary supports were also provided for 40 “street” children.<sup>18</sup>

Later, during the 2003 dzud in Dundgovi, SC implemented a MNT 31 million emergency relief project to provide 36 tonne of food for 370 poor families with three and more children, plus livestock feeds for 530 households in the Adaatsag and Erdenedalai soums. Coal and firewood, warm blankets, bedding items, and food supplies were also provided for kindergartens, dormitories and hospitals.<sup>19</sup>

Monitoring and assessment reports on SC’s emergency relief projects indicated that its timely responses to difficult times had been highly valued by local authorities and communities. SC believes that, by helping herder families to preserve livelihoods that depend on their livestock, a significant number of households had been prevented from falling into extreme poverty. It was also reported that SC’s efforts had contributed positively to reduce stress, school drop-outs, and other negative impacts from these emergencies for vulnerable children and their families. Support for dormitories, kindergartens and hospitals helped to smooth their operations during the difficulties.

Taking the needs and vulnerabilities of children into account during all aspects of relief projects has always been an important facet in SC’s emergency responses. Based on its international and in-country experiences of implementing emergency relief projects, SC has promoted the concept of “child-sensitive emergency responses” by organising training for National Emergency Management Agency personnel and other relevant State and non-State agencies (2006).

SC’s experiences have shown that herder families’ vulnerabilities, and especially that of their children, increase significantly during and after emergencies. Herder families often become divided – whilst labour-aged members live or move for many months to new areas in search of pastures for their livestock, older people stay at soum and bagh centres, and children live at dormitories without hearing from their families for several months. Children are also often left with non-relatives. Due to heavy storms and snow blocking roads, soums and baghs become isolated and inaccessible, causing delays in delivering food and other supplies to dormitories, hospitals and other institutions. Due to all these various factors, children are often exposed to considerable risks during and after emergencies, and their specific needs and vulnerabilities must, therefore, be considered in any emergency responses.



*Emergency relief distribution, Adaatsag, Dundgovi, 2003*

<sup>18</sup> Save the Children UK Emergency Project in Dornod, 2001, Project report

<sup>19</sup> Save the Children UK Emergency Project in Dundgovi, 2003, Project report

## Promoting Community-based Child Development and Protection Mechanisms (2003 and onwards)

Save the Children's community-based child protection and development centres established during 2003 and onwards, introduced new approaches to community-based support for disadvantaged children and their families. A wide range of developmental and educational activities, including regular training and discussion forums on positive discipline for children, are conducted with children and parents.

The centres have become well known, not only for their wide range of developmental and educational activities to promote children's genuine active participation, inspiration and enthusiasm, but also for becoming a real networking and coordination hub for key professionals engaged in resolving various issues children face in their communities. With the advantages of its presence at and close links to relevant communities, schools, clinics, as well as local government administrative offices, SC's staff members are able to prevent, identify and respond to various issues associated with child development and protection within their communities.

Save the Children believes that its centres serve as models for distinctive and cost-effective, community-based social services, that were envisioned in the Government of Mongolia's Social Security Sector Strategy Paper adopted in 2003. Besides developing service models with potential for Government replication, SC has taken other steps to support the Government's intentions to promote community-based social services. In view of benefits from such services for children and communities, SC has commissioned an international consulting service (2007) to help MSWL to realise a provision in the Law on Social Welfare to contract-out social services, particularly community-based services, to NGOs. SC hopes that MSWL will make the best use of these inputs to guide the organisation of contracted-out social services.

"...I have discovered myself since I started visiting the centre. Before, I never went out of my home and never participated at any special activities, but now, I have become someone who understands and respects others. This is a big change for me."

*16 year-old boy*

"...Since I joined a boys' support group, I have stopped arguing and fighting with other children. Now I have changed a lot and become friendly towards other children and they have also stopped being cold and angry towards me. Communication with my teachers has improved too. Now I feel happier than ever."

*15 Year-old boy*



“I am a member of the Children’s Club, called “Protection”. We meet here at Save the Children, and sometimes at other places. The Club is a great place to learn and understand about rights. As part of our activities, we conducted a survey involving about 180 children studying at schools to ask them if and how their rights are being violated. Children we surveyed told us how their teachers do not treat them properly and what it was like to be poor and at school. Some children’s parents were unemployed, so they too needed to work. Unemployed people drink a lot and their families have to suffer even more. We put this information in a report<sup>20</sup>—people should know that children have rights and these violations are wrong. Now, we are meeting to decide what else we can do about the violations.”

*S, 9th grade student.*



*A member of the “Protection club“ is on promotion of Spank Out Day on 30 April 2009.*



*Children’s activities at a Community-based Centre for Child Development and Protection. Ulaanbaatar, 2005.*

<sup>20</sup> This was the “Child Protection, Today” report written by children from the “Protection” Club and submitted to the UN Committee on CRC (2008)



### Case Study: Child Protection Unit (CPU) at National Centre Against Violence (NCAV)

Social and economic changes brought about by Mongolia's transition to a market economy had led to increasing unemployment, rising poverty, increasing alcohol consumption (particularly amongst men), and higher incidents of violence against women and children. With this background, NCAV, the first Mongolian NGO centre committed to combating violence against women and children was founded in 1995.

By 1997, the centre's initial services offered for battered women were gradually expanded to schools to support children, teachers and policy officers dealing with the effects of domestic violence. SC made valuable contributions to expand services by providing technical and financial support to generate public education and awareness-raising materials, and by providing training for police and children's prison officers, the Association of Women Lawyers' members, women's organisations, and children's centres.

Responding to the growing number of children affected by domestic violence, a Child Protection Unit was established at the NCAV in 2001, with technical and financial support from SC. Since then, SC has been the CPU's principal partner effectively supporting its professional capacity building and service development, network and partnership building amongst State and non-State players engaged in combating violence against children. By providing opportunities for CPU staff members to be exposed to international experiences in child protection through study tours, training and seminars abroad, SC made enormous contributions to develop the country's first specialized child-protection institution.

Since 2003, CPU's efforts to introduce its multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach to community-based child protection have been piloted successfully in close collaboration with SC's community-based centres in Ulaanbaatar and Dornod. This approach has now been increasingly recognised by Government and replicated with support from other international organisations.

Over the years, CPU services have become well known to the public, Government, and to international and local players. With increased support for its services, in 2008, the NCAV opened a shelter for battered children that became an important service hub for the CPU. NCAV has become one of the first few NGOs to receive Government financial support.

Since its establishment, CPU has provided counselling, rehabilitation, legal aid and other supports for 600 child victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, and has protected the health and lives of 135 children through its shelter services. Besides its greatly-needed services for children and their families, CPU takes a strong stand to improve the legal and policy framework for child protection. It is a key member of the National Coalition for Child Protection (2008).



**Let's Develop  
Child Protection System  
in Mongolia!**





## Child Protection System Development (2005 and onwards)

Since its start in 1994, Child protection issues have always been at the heart of Save the Children's Mongolia Programme. Although harm, abuse, exploitation and vulnerability may arise wherever children are, the country's social and economic changes during the transition period and thereafter had brought new vulnerabilities and risks for children. These included abuse and exploitation arising from migration, homelessness, and exploitative work conditions, dropping out of schools, living on the streets and, particularly, violence at home, in educational settings and at institutions.

Save the Children's earlier interventions, based on extremely pressing needs during those times, focused largely on protecting and rehabilitating children in especially difficult circumstances, namely, street and working children. Later efforts to develop community-based child protection service models widened the scope of Save the Children's protection services for children at risk of or being affected by abuse and violence. SC's work to establish systems to prepare professional social workers and to develop social work services further, has provided the very grounds to build one of the essential professional capacities required for a child protection system.

Together with CSD, Save the Children initiated the development of a code of conduct for social workers, to be introduced for the first time in Mongolia. SC's review of Mongolia's social work policy and practices at schools and at soum/khoroos levels (2006-2007) has provided valuable recommendations for developing professional social work in the country. With SC's input, (draft) job descriptions and sample guidance for social workers at schools provided additional clarity to guide school-based social work services. Provided this guidance is successfully applied in practice, it will clearly advance current practices towards much more professional services to prevent and protect children (boys and girls) from abuse, violence, discrimination and neglect, as well as ensuring that educational settings are more protective.

By 2005, with both its international and in-country experience in child protection, SC was well positioned to promote its ambitious aim for the country to strengthen its child protection system to become more comprehensive. The country's development context and systems built during previous years, allowed SC to raise child protection issues in a much broader context. There were already some solid grounds to develop a more comprehensive child-protection system in the country. Long and



consistent efforts by SC and others to protect and rehabilitate children in especially difficult circumstances, as well as to develop national, local and organisational capacities to address child protection issues effectively, had so far made valuable contributions to national efforts to protect children.

Save the Children's review on "Mongolia's National Child Protection System" (2006) drew attention to the need to develop a comprehensive child-protection system. The joint acknowledgement of this review report in May 2006 by the Parliament Standing Committee on Education, Science and Social Policy, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, and SC had become a remarkable turning point in the country's endeavours to conceptualise a child protection system approach. It was made clear that the time had come to move from an issue-based approach to a comprehensive system-based approach to child protection, with meaningful coordination across all sectors and at all levels.

Pride has been expressed that Save the Children has brought, spread and championed the internationally accepted concept of child protection and the need for a child protection system in Mongolia. As no single agency is able to develop the foundations for a proper child-protection system, SC has always greatly emphasised building strategic and effective partnerships at all levels; with the Government, other international organisations and local NGOs. Key roles taken so far by SC include mobilising NGOs to assist them to advocate for an effective child-protection system, to lead this process, particularly to inspire others during the initial stages, as well as to facilitate and provide technical support for Government and NGO task groups. SC has, in particular, focused on promoting Government ownership during all stages of the process.

Since 2006, Save the Children has worked to build a shared, common understanding of the child protection concept in Mongolia, since key international and local players' understanding of and approaches to child protection had varied greatly. Together with the NAC, NCAV, MSWL and CPCAN, SC developed a conceptual paper

on child protection and a child-protection system, and submitted it to the Government. At the same time, SC intensified its actions on awareness building and advocacy, targeting both the general public and policy makers. A number of media products (documentaries, television and radio programmes, talk-shows, news articles, etc.), plus public exhibitions (e.g., the photographic exhibition "STOP Violence Against Children NOW") based on real cases of children experiencing various forms of abuse and violence, all served the abovementioned purposes well. As part of its advocacy efforts with policy makers, during the 2007 Parliament pre-election campaigns, SC, together with Child Protection Coalition agencies, jointly organised an open forum at which 11 political parties and 22 civil society organisations participated. For many of these politicians, this provided the first opportunity to learn about the child-protection concept and its importance for the country.

The efforts of SC and others, especially of other international and local child-focused agencies and professionals, has brought notable progresses to date. Between 2006 (when SC first raised the child-protection system issue) and now, the need to protect children from harm, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect, and children's rights to such protection, are increasingly well understood and recognised in the society. The role of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, NAC, MSWL and other State and non-State players, such as the "Child Protection Alliance" (involving 25 organisations) and the "National Child Protection Network" etc., has been increased significantly to take firm stands to advocate for a comprehensive child protection system to be developed in this country. Development of a Government "Strategy to Strengthen Child Protection in Mongolia (2009-2014)" is currently in progress under NAC's leadership, with some technical and financial support from UNICEF. SC believes that its technical input provided for the strategy-development process has added significant value to the overall process. SC has no doubt that this strategy, once completed, will provide powerful and unifying guidance for Mongolia's efforts to protect all its children.

## Partnering with Children (1994 and onwards)

Save the Children is extremely proud of its partnership with children for the realization of children's rights. Children have always been actively involved in our work, programme planning and delivery, as well as policy and advocacy efforts; but also in promoting initiatives and taking actions on their own.

### Case Study: Working Children

"...The first research on working children that we conducted in 2000 was a participatory action research with the active involvement of working children themselves. Children did an excellent job to identify the types of work children were engaged in at various markets in Ulaanbaatar, and drawing up the first estimates of the number of children working at markets. I remember that children were most concerned about the facts that some children were begging and stealing, young children were smoking, children having no warm clothes and adults treating children badly. They made a map of the city with various types of children's work indicated by using different colour papers and figures.

Staff at Save the Children, including Marc Laporte, the Programme Director, were very impressed with the results of children's research. It was also very exciting that the British Ambassador, Ms. Kay Coombs, invited them to her house to treat them to cake that she had baked for them. Many of these children involved in the research have stayed in contact with Save the Children for a long time. One of these, a boy named Davaa, later participated with a professional research team to undertake a situation analysis on working children, commissioned by Save the Children. We helped him to open a savings account at a bank to deposit MNT 50 from his first salary earned by working on that research...."

*Ts.Battuya, SC "Working Children" Project Officer (1998-2002)*

*Davaanyam (first row, first on the right) was a 9th grade student when he joined SC's "Focus on Kids" fine arts project, jointly implement with the Arts Council of Mongolia since 2005. This project aims to increase children's self expression through the art of photography. Davaanyam, with no previous knowledge of and experience with photography, literally fell in love with photography, and after a year, decided to become a professional photographer. His talents and hard work paid off. During the past few years, he has successfully participated at several photographic contests and has*



*organised two exhibitions of his photographs. Davaanyam is now a partner at Save the Children and has worked as a photographer for several Save the Children publications and as the producer of several documentaries on child rights issues. Save the Children has been delighted to support his exhibition "STOP Violence Against Children, NOW!" (2008).*

### Case Study: Child-led Research

Save the Children facilitated the first child-led research in Mongolia, Children Living in Difficult Circumstances (2006). This research was conducted by 19 children with previous experience of institutional care and street life. Children worked together to identify research goals, methods and to develop interview questions. They collected and analysed data, prepared the report and presented research findings to the public.

The process had a significant impact on child empowerment as it enabled the child researchers to gain new knowledge, make new friends, learn to work as a team and to engage in collective decision making.

“I liked the children, who trusted me and participated in interviews although they were complete strangers to me. Usually, people don’t trust and talk to a stranger about their lives.”

*Child Researcher, E. Enkhsuvd (age 18)*

“I liked how the research was conducted. Children carried out all steps of the research on their own. I am unable to forget the words of one child interviewed. When I went to her house, her house was clean and she was taking care of her younger sister. Her father came in, yelled for a while and went to sleep. After that her mother came and also yelled at her and hit her. She told me that even though her parents love her they don’t understand her feelings.”

*Child Researcher, B. Ariunzaya (age 18)*



*Z. Ulziikhuu, an 18 year-old young Mongolian person participated for the 2nd time at the annual meeting of the Global Children’s Panel established at Save the Children UK Headquarters in London for the purpose of ensuring child participation in organizational decision making (2009). Z.Ulziikhuu (in the centre) described the current situation and challenges faced by children in Mongolia.*

Children play a very distinctive role in the country's efforts to develop a national child protection system. Children increasingly take actions independently, such as, arranging meetings and discussions with various stakeholders, including decision makers, writing letters to policy makers, engaging in media events, releasing calls to demand child rights, expressing their views through photography, expressing their opinions, etc.

SC was delighted to assist a group of children to initiate the process of successfully submitting a Children's Shadow Report to the UN Committee on the CRC (2008). With the

insightful cases and facts included, the report raised many child protection issues in regard to children affected by violence and abuse, living on streets, engaged in hazardous labour, in conflict with law and imprisoned, children with disabilities discriminated against, dropped-out of schools, living without parental care, living in care institutions with inadequate quality of services, and disadvantaged because of culture and language differences. Based on their analysis, children made their own recommendations and suggestions on how to make improvements so that all children of Mongolia will be protected.



*For the first time in Mongolia, children had independently organized a press conference (2007) in regard to a case of corporal punishment given to three students by their teacher at school. Children appealed to school teachers and parents, and called for a petition to stop violence against children.*

A group of 27 children who had attended SC's community-based centres wrote a "Child Protection, Today" report for the UN Committee on CRC (2008). After successfully working together for four months on this report, the children continued to take their joint actions by forming a "protection" club, to protect the interests of children. In June 2009, inspired and committed to making a difference for children, the children established their own NGO "Child-to-child". Tsogtegreel, the leader says that they are to fight for adults and policy makers to recognise children's rights, especially their rights to protection.



## Examples of Children's Publication Work



**REFLECTING BACK ON HOW  
SAVE THE CHILDREN  
HAS WORKED (1994-2009)**





## REFLECTING BACK ON HOW SAVE THE CHILDREN HAS WORKED (1994-2009)

The process of compiling the Save the Children UK Mongolia Programme experiences during the past 15 years was indeed an important endeavour for us, to reflect upon the history of the programme's establishment, its evolution over the years, and ways of working. While the principles, rights and responsibilities set out in the UNCRC have always provided a key framework for our work in Mongolia, strategic choices made and approaches taken at different times varied to bring the most significant impacts for children given the ever-changing context of the country and the situation of its children.

In our programming, the focus has always been on the most disadvantaged children. Our understanding of situations for the most disadvantaged groups of children, the risks and vulnerabilities they are exposed to, challenges and opportunities they face, was regularly up-graded with research studies and thorough analysis conducted by SC and other agencies. While taking a wide range of practical actions to address various factors affecting children's lives, their education, protection and wellbeing, our Mongolia Programme has effectively strengthened relevant policies and mechanisms, and successfully built supportive constituencies that help to make lasting changes possible.

The knowledge, experiences and learning gained from our work with a wide range of local State and non-State partners, including children themselves, fed into our work to influence central and local government and other stakeholders' policies and practices. SC approaches to working with the Government have largely been supportive to Government actions to improve the lives of children. While taking collaborative actions by strengthening the capacities of relevant organizations and lobbying for wider and systems' impacts through policy and legal changes, SC has to make its voice clear in cases where Government approaches are not in line with children's rights

(i.e., a case in 2001 when SC had to oppose the Government's intention to establish a military school for "street" children). Overall, given the fact that children's issues have traditionally taken considerable Government attention, Mongolia had exceptionally favourable and enabling conditions for SC to work in. The Government of Mongolia has always supported and collaborated with SC. SC always paid great attention to building and nurturing supportive constituencies by partnering effectively with State and non-State, international and local players, including NGOs, research and academic institutions, media, lawyers, professionals, etc. SC was not only concerned about the outcomes of its partnerships, but also the processes these partnerships were going through. SC tried to make the processes enabling for mutual learning and development for the participating parties.

Save the Children believes that its efforts to build partnerships with and in regard to capacity building for its partners, including children, parents, communities and various civil society groups, have significantly impacted the wider society. Children have always been SC's partners with a very distinctive and unique role played. Through the years of work with various NGOs, SC has made notable contributions to the overall development of civil society organisations, particularly child-focused NGOs. The Child Rights Programming approach that Save the Children UK has been successfully promoting and demonstrating through its actions has been a truly powerful way to work with and influence other players. In fact, this is the main legacy that Save the Children UK will leave behind.

From the very beginning of its work in Mongolia, SC believed that strengthening civil society and building constituencies to support and initiate changes was the most powerful way of working in this country. And, this has been proved by its work in Mongolia. Promoting active



participation by children, parents, communities and civil society organisations to hold duty bearers accountable for the realisation of children's rights has been a challenging but exceptionally rewarding area of SC's work.

It is believed that SC's support to and partnership with civil society, has contributed notably to the fact that child-focused local NGOs have become much stronger than ever before. In 2004, with facilitation by SC, local NGOs were engaged for the first time in Mongolia, to draw up and submit an NGO Shadow Report on UNCRC implementation in Mongolia, and consequently participated at the Committee's review session. This active involvement by NGOs provided the Committee with additional insights into children's realities in the country that were subsequently reflected in the UN Committee's Concluding Observations and Recommendations given to the Mongolian Government (2005). This brought a new wave of movement for children's rights, resulting the approval of a comprehensive plan of actions for the second phase of the National Programme of Actions on Child Development and Protection. The whole process was a powerful learning

and development endeavour, not only for local NGOs but also for other players. In 2008, local NGOs were able to work on their Shadow Report, for the second time, with little assistance from SC. In the same year, SC was also delighted to facilitate the development and submission of a children's shadow report to the UN Committee on the CRC, and was proud to see the results and impacts it had for the children.

Strengthened and empowered by rights-based approaches, civil society activists will be the champions of children's' rights. To name a few, the Association of Parents with Disabled Children, the "Education and Child Rights" Coalition, and the National Child Protection Network of local NGOs, the Child Protection Coalition to Develop a Comprehensive Child Protection System, etc., all deserve everyone's pride. The fight for children's rights has become a reality in this country.

The value of SC's experiences and achievements in Mongolia is not only in the changes brought to the lives of children, but also in its unique contributions to benefit the wider society, to develop a rights-based, democratic society, where the right of every person is respected, promoted and protected.





### **John Beauclerk**

Save the Children UK, Mongolia, Country Director (1994-1999)

When I landed at Buyant Uha just before Tsagan Sar in 1994 it was to set up an office and a programme in response to a request to Save the Children UK from the National Children's Centre. There was just enough budget for costs and a start-up programme or two, but it was clear that anything more ambitious would need to be financed locally. Save the Children was thinly stretched in Central and East Asia, with similar outposts in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. But Save the Children in Mongolia was to be different, organised as part of its long-standing South-East Asia Region. The prevailing wisdom in Mongolia at the time was that economic reforms would soon be delivering prosperity to complement the individual civil liberties gained in 1990. Temporary assistance was all that was required, mainly in helping institutions and their staff to adapt to the new market conditions.

Representing a majority of the population, children and young people presented a special case in this optimistic scenario. On the one hand they were Mongolia's hope and future; on the other hand they were a liability - with or without transition, the public cost of quality health and education services would continue to be high. Then they would need employment at an unprecedented level - tens of thousands of new entrants into the labour market every year.

The big question of the time was this: would the Mongolian State organise itself (in the Asian mode, for example Korea) to nurture its human capital and build an egalitarian market economy - or would it follow the prevailing western fashion for neo-liberalism? This theory declared that market operators would provide everything needed to put the country back on its feet. They would create wealth and jobs would "trickle down" to the working population. The job of Government was to regulate, with as light a touch as possible, and to provide services only as a last resort.

The new political establishment made an early decision to apply "shock therapy" to the economy and governments of different stripes have stuck with that decision ever since. By all accounts, Mongolia's children are still waiting for the benefits to trickle down. Already by 1994 the UN and parts of the World Bank were becoming alarmed at the impact of this extreme version of neo-liberalism. Privatisation rapidly killed off the Negdel cooperative structure and set in motion a process of migration that has swollen the cities with jobless people. Industrial output plummeted, bringing mass unemployment; poverty (unknown to a generation of Mongolians) leapt to around a third of the population and has stubbornly remained there; public services, starved of funds, deteriorated. Parents despaired at the realisation that their children would be less educated than themselves. I will always remember the emotional

comment of a senior WB official, shocked by conditions he saw in Dornod around 1996: “The provincial economy did not have to be destroyed like this - the dignity of workers has to be better respected in processes of transition”. And, he had only seen the tip of the iceberg!

Thanks to its connections with the children’s services, Save the Children witnessed at first hand the plight of children throughout the country. Its first joint initiative with the NCC was a training programme exposing the country’s cadre of “children’s workers” to the Convention of the Rights of the Child and introducing them to participatory ways of relating to children and their communities. This training programme was later institutionalised in the State University’s Department for Social Work, which developed a specialisation in school social work (aimed at stemming drop-outs amongst the poor). The Department also trained many of the personnel who worked in the NGO sector that grew up to address the social crisis for children as it unfolded - including several volunteers who ran Save the Children’s “khot ail” shelters. Modelled on family life and run by the street children themselves, these shelters were an alternative to the formal orphanages.

When the NPAP started in 1994 with World Bank start-up funding, Save the Children was determined that children should not be sidelined. Our most ambitious intervention at this stage was an effort to protect the pre-school system through a national programme in cooperation with the Ministry of Education – the NPPS – a five-year national pre-school strengthening programme. Save the Children admired this universal service’s contribution to children’s care and development but our main worry was that the children who needed the service most – the poor, the disabled, the isolated herders) – were being excluded in favour of the urban and well-off, who benefited from continuing subsidies. Save the Children was very proud when UNDP obtained funding from the Government of the Netherlands for the NPPS, and the NPAP brought it under its umbrella.

Save the Children was always lucky with its partners. Government partners came and went at this period with alarming speed, as civil servants depended for their position on political party support, greatly reducing the effectiveness of particular government departments. But leadership was outstanding at the NCC, the Ulaanbaatar Children’s Centre, the NPAP and the Ministry of Science and Education’s pre-school department – all run by very competent women with a strong sense of integrity and mission.

Within civil society, Save the Children also developed a strong partnership with the Centre for Social Development, a support organisation formed by progressive young trainers and researchers at the Institute of Administration and Management Development (IAMD) in Zaisan. When in the late 1990s the British Embassy entrusted its Mongolia partnership scheme funds to Save the

Children, the start-up grant we made for CSD was one of our most enduring benefits to Mongolia. It is encouraging to see that the CSD is fully engaged on social issues, as it could equally have developed into an economic think tank. Especially important is its monitoring of national poverty alleviation efforts. Its major contribution to the Participatory Poverty Assessment of 2006, sets out very clearly what children, young people and their parents think about the current situation they are in.

Save the Children was also lucky with its staff, attracting first rate financial and programme personnel from the beginning. Several of these moved into Save the Children's international cadre and one of CSD's researchers became a respected Director of Save the Children in Mongolia. Former staff can be found at UNICEF in Mongolia and in large international NGOs. If one disregarded the political overtones of the Komsomol training, it was easy to find common ground between western and Mongolian children's workers. The best of the children's workers were always Save the Children's most effective grassroots mobilisers and at least one has started her own NGO.

Given all this talent, it is a shame that a Mongolian Save the Children never emerged to become an independent member of the International Save the Children Alliance. My deepest regret is that I did not think through the "indigenisation" of Save the Children Mongolia when I had the chance. The need is as great, if not greater, than it was in 1994. On top of the unfinished business of the 90s, Mongolia has yet to face the effects of the global credit crunch and the unravelling neo-liberal model. The impact of Save the Children's early work is yet to be found in mainstream services - for example, despite all the efforts made under the NPPS, UNICEF has had to repeat the call for a national pre-school programme.

Without independent organisations like Save the Children, linked to but not owned by international civic alliances, who will pose the difficult questions that affect present and future generations? Now that Mongolia is placing all its hope in export-led mining growth, what is it to stop it becoming yet another rich country of poor people, "cursed" by mineral wealth?

As a development worker who came to Mongolia after 20 years in Latin America, Central Africa and South Asia it is still a mystery why a country like Mongolia, which had achieved so much that other countries reach for with open arms, should have thrown away its unique store of added value - its treasure of human and environmental capital - without a second thought.

*UK, 2009*



### **Marc Laporte**

Save the Children UK, Mongolia, Country Director (1999-2003)

Like everyone associated closely with the Mongolia programme, I was shocked and saddened by the news that Save the Children UK will leave Mongolia in July 2009 and will be followed by SC Japan. So, when Tungalag approached me to write a few lines on the programme highlights from 1999 to 2003, my initial reaction was to sift through my memories of Mongolia to try to identify which programme or projects were the most successful in terms of impact. But what I am really reminded of are the faces of young boys and girls who found a new family in Save the Children UK's shelters, who were able to attend school, graduate and become responsible citizens with children of their own. Maybe one day, they will open their house to a child who needs a foster family. I recall the smiles on the faces of disabled children attending school for the first time in their life and their parents proudly establishing the Association of Parents of Disabled Children to collectively fight for the rights of their children. Not to forget the strong dedication of SC staff at improving educational infrastructure, curriculum, children's access and teachers' training which enhanced, in an indelible manner, the quality of the educational system.

Overall, it occurs very clearly to me that the most significant factor in the Save the Children UK Mongolia programme was the quality of the team. Rarely before did I have the opportunity to work with such a highly motivated and committed group of people. Hence, when I returned to Mongolia in October 2008, it was not a surprise to find out that many of the former staff of Save the Children UK now held senior positions in UN organisations, international and local NGOs.

Nevertheless, despite such a valuable contribution, I am wondering whether SC did everything needed to strengthen civil society partners that could have built upon the work of Save the Children UK and make a real difference in the lives of Mongolian children.

The fact that this closure takes place in a time of economic hardship is perhaps a grim reminder of the changing nature of international cooperation. Whereas 15 years ago, international NGOs opened country programmes based on the needs of the country, nowadays decisions to close or open are often based on criteria not obvious to everyone....

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all those who, as part of Save the Children UK, have for the last 15 years strived to made a difference in the lives of Mongolian children.

*Canada, 2009*



**Karlo Puskarista**

Save the Children UK, Mongolia, Country Director (2003-2004)

What I felt as the most significant achievement of Mongolian Programme was our substantial contribution to uniting various stakeholders under one slogan – “Children have Rights”. Government bodies and officials, local and international NGOs, parents, police, UN agencies, school and kindergarten teachers and many others took active part in bringing changes to the lives of Mongolian children. Most importantly, children were, as much as possible, active participants in our work. I feel honoured and grateful that I had an opportunity to be part of the Save the Children UK Mongolia Programme team and I hope that all of our staff and partners share the feeling of pride that I have for what we have achieved in those two years.

*Kosovo, 2009*



**Tungalag Chuluun**

Save the Children UK, Mongolia, Country Director (2005-2007)

For many years, since 1996, I was lucky to work closely with Save the Children UK.

When I first joined SC in 2002 as Deputy Programme Director I was truly impressed by the depth of its commitment to children’s rights, its strong links and partnerships with communities, parents, as well as local and central government agencies. including the then National Agency for Children. Besides its innovative, thematic works on education and child protection, one of the most remarkable changes that SC has promoted during that time was its joint efforts with UNICEF and WVI to technically and financially support the NAC to review its institutional mandate and reposition itself through a nationwide consultative process to develop its mid-term strategies. As a result of that two-year-long process, the NAC’s Mid-Term Strategy was approved by the Government (2004) and the National Authority for Children started to function under the Deputy Prime Minister’s oversight, with its newly revised mandate to serve as the main Government agency to promote and monitor children’s rights in Mongolia.

The years during which I was honoured to lead the Save the Children UK’s Country Programme (2005-2007) coincided with the years of substantial changes at SCUk globally. It was time when Save the Children UK strategically reviewed its programming priorities and enhanced its working approaches to bring wider impacts for the millions of children across the globe suffering from hunger,

maltreatment, poor health, and inadequate education, as well as natural and manmade disasters. More roles and responsibilities were newly devolved down to country programmes. Internally, these were the years when Mongolia's economy was after all progressing well since its transition to a market economy. The country became much more resourceful than ever before and had much more potential to improve the situation for its children. There was a strong civil society to voice and fight for the rights of children.

With this background, during 2005-2007, Mongolia's programme went through a challenging transition process of moving towards a more explicit rights-based approach with ever-increasing claims for children's rights and demands on the duty bearers. It was a time to expand our programmes with more research, policy and advocacy work to broaden the impacts of our work by successfully building on our experiences from previous years. Our involvements in policy and advocacy work were well backed up, with high-quality research studies successfully built on Save the Children's international and practical in-country experiences. The Mongolian team was privileged to work in close collaboration with an increasing number of committed, Government and non-Government partners. Building support constituencies also worked well, and together we achieved a lot.

It was my honour to work with the Mongolia team extremely dedicated and talented professionals. It has always been very unique and inspirational for me to be a part of this team. After all these years, I think that what is amazing about SC is its power to enable the professional growth of its people no matter what positions they held. We see such growth in every single staff member who has been part of the team during the past 15 years.

Taking on this occasion, I extend my sincere thanks to all our greatly committed staff and partners for their truly hard work and determination to deliver high quality programme work for the benefit of the Mongolian children, and wish them all of the best for the future.

*Ulaanbaatar, 2009*



### **Mitsuaki Toyoda**

Save the Children UK, Mongolia, Country Director (2007-2009)

During my two years of association with Save the Children UK in Mongolia, I have come across so many inspiring moments that have left deep impressions on me that will not go away. As the Country Director, I'm supposed to be inspiring others; but instead, I've been inspired by so many of my Mongolian colleagues and partners who share the same values as mine in working to improve the lives of children, especially of the poor and most marginalised children. As part of my personal reflection on the very short years I have served with Save the Children, I would like to share some of the most memorable moments I encountered while working with Save the Children.

One morning, I decided rather abruptly to visit a facility called a children's welfare and care centre in Ulaanbaatar City. It is a State-run facility where up to 56 street children would be cared for temporarily, until their identities could be verified and their parents contacted to take them back home. I heard a lot about this facility from our staff. I had some free time that morning, so I decided to make a visit to the centre for the first time, along with one of our protection staff.

Although we never made an appointment, the officer on duty that morning kindly allowed us to enter the facility. The facility itself looked better than I expected, though it still resembled a juvenile detention centre. A man we met showed us through the facility where children aged 3-16 were being cared for under 24-hour surveillance. About one-third of them happened to be girls, I was told later.

As we were walking through the hallway, I heard some commotion coming from a classroom. Being curious, I looked into the classroom through a small window in the door to find out what was going on – and what a nice surprise it was. I discovered a very familiar face, a Save the Children staff member, fully engaging himself with the children by leading group activities. To my embarrassment, I learned only that morning that Save the Children had already been supporting weekly life-skills training for the children at this centre for a few months, and that I accidentally happened to run into one of the weekly training sessions.

For the next few moments, I quietly stood there outside the classroom to observe how he would relate to the children. He did not know that I was there, watching him. It was so inspiring to see how he related to the children. No-one had to tell me how sincere he was, how much he cared for these children, and how much he wanted these children to live better lives. It was all apparent in his appearance and actions; and the children were responding to him with full attention and engagement. I developed a new sense of respect for him and his colleagues that day. They were doing their



part to make a difference in the lives of those children, who may have been abused, harmed or neglected by the very people who are supposed to love and protect them.

Being the Country Director of Save the Children, I often get invited to attend various conferences organised by the Government to take part in policy discussions relating to children's issues. I still remember the time when my deputy and I attended a national conference in early 2008 hosted by the Government where child protection issues were at the top of the agenda. It was well attended by more than 120 representatives from various governmental, international and non-governmental organisations. There, at the conference, during a question and answer session after a key-note speech, my deputy spoke out on behalf of vulnerable children on those imminent child protection issues that needed to be addressed by the central Government. She challenged the elected Government officials who were present at the conference to follow through on their election campaign promises, to improve policies and mechanisms in-country to realise children's rights to protection from violence. She was able to deliver her speech in such a compelling, inspiring manner, I think no-one had missed the point of the urgent need to develop a national child protection system in the country.

I also remember the time when I took a monitoring trip to Dornod Province where Save the Children has been supporting a number of education and protection projects for the last several years. There, I visited a rehabilitation centre for children with disabilities which Save the Children had helped establish in 2003. It is a three-room facility in the provincial hospital, large enough to care for the very basic rehabilitation needs of only 2-3 children at a time. It serves as the only facility in the Province to meet the rehabilitation needs of more than 900 children with disabilities estimated to be living in the Province. The centre is co-operated by the hospital and the local branch chapter of the Association of Parents with Disabled Children (APDC).

Although small in capacity, and challenged by a lack of adequate resources to meet all the needs and demands, I was very much impressed by how the centre had been operating as a joint effort by the hospital and the local chapter of APDC to serve the rehabilitation needs of disabled children in the Province. I felt that, because of their joint efforts, parents are now able to receive the mentoring support they need, and the children are now able to access the rehabilitation services they require; and that there is a caring community emerging in Dornod to address the needs and rights of children with disabilities. This is a significant improvement when considering that no such facility or services had existed before at a provincial level in the country, let alone in Dornod.

The above stories exemplify how we worked as Save the Children UK to go about improving the lives of Mongolian children. We engaged in practical actions, policy advocacy, and built supportive



constituencies – all directing us toward the end goal of improving children’s lives. But, obviously, it is not so much the strategies and approaches of Save the Children that I appreciated most. What I will treasure most from my experience of working with Save the Children is the people with whom I was privileged to work. Each person I met and worked with came with different strengths, backgrounds, technical expertise and personalities; but we all shared the same values and life goals to make positive differences in children’s and people’s lives, to contribute to the development process of Mongolia. I learned so much from our staff and others associated with Save the Children, of what it means to work with passion, commitment, expertise and dedication to transform children’s lives.

I’m hopeful that what Save the Children UK was and was not able to accomplish during the past 15 years in Mongolia will be picked up by Save the Children Japan and others, as we continue to strive toward improving the realisation of Mongolian children’s rights in the country, and to create a better future for all.

*Ulaanbaatar, 2009*

## SAVE THE CHILDREN UK IN MONGOLIA EXTENDS THANKS

The successes of Save the Children UK's 15-year endeavour to bring lasting improvements in the lives of children in Mongolia are drawn from contributions by a very large number of individuals and organisations.

Save the Children would like to thank the thousands of children and young people throughout the country who worked with us, who helped us to see the world through the eyes of children, who made their unique contributions to improve their own and others' lives by voicing, actively participating in, and taking action to effect positive changes in their realities and to bring brighter futures for all children in Mongolia.

Save the Children would like to extend its profound thanks to parents and communities that worked with us and made invaluable contributions to change social attitudes in respect to children's rights, and to build child-friendly environments in homes, at schools and in communities. Very special thanks go to the Association of Parents with Disabled Children, for being active fighters for the rights of disabled children.

Save the Children would like to thank all our respected Government and non-government partners at central and local levels. Without them we would not have achieved so much. Very special thanks to the Deputy Prime Minister's Office, National Authority for Children, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour, and to all local governments for their support for and partnership with us. We extend our sincere thanks to our civil society partners, and to members of the "Education and Child Rights" Coalition and "National Child Protection Coalition", who made our partnership sufficiently powerful to bring about substantial policy and legislative changes. The amazing energy and determination of our partners has always been truly inspirational and rewarding for us.

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## DONOR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS (1994-2009)

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Save the Children also wishes to thank the British Embassy in Ulaanbaatar for always extending its support to achieve SC's mission and vision to bring lasting improvements to the lives of Mongolian children. It has been our honour and privilege to be associated with Her Majesty's Ambassador to Mongolia, Ms. Thorda Abbott-Watt, and her predecessors, Mr. Anthony Morey (1991–1993), Mr. Ian Sloane (1994–1997), Mr. John Durham (1997–1999), Ms. Kay Coombs (1999–2001), Mr. Philip Rouse (2001–2004), Mr. Richard Austen (2004–2006) and Mr. Christopher Osborne (2006–2008) for their immense support given to our work with and for the children of Mongolia.

### List of Donor Partners:

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## A GRAPH ON SAVE THE CHILDREN'S INTERVENTIONS, AND GOVERNMENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES (1994-2009)

A graph below presents some highlights of Save the Children UK Mongolia Programme's involvements over the last 15 years in the light of policy and legislative developments relevant to our work with children. The graph does not necessarily suggest that Save the Children takes credits for all the policy changes happened during these years; but rather, it is merely our intention to show to the readers the links between Save the Children's work and what happened in the policy and legislative areas during our operation in Mongolia. Moreover, the information on the relevant government policy and legislative changes are by no means comprehensive, but it captures the main milestones as relevant to Save the Children's work in fighting for children's rights over the last 15 years in Mongolia.

Key actions taken by or with support of Save the Children UK	YEARS	Relevant Government policy and legislative changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Save the Children UK Mongolia Office was established and Mongolia Country Programme was launched.</li> <li>* Review of preschool education was conducted and followed up with child-centered policy development.</li> <li>* Training of NCC children's workers started to introduce UNCRC and local development concepts</li> </ul>	1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Law on Temporary Detention of Street Children was introduced.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* "Participatory Approaches to Social Development" and "Child-focused Development" trainings were introduced nationwide.</li> <li>* Alternative forms of preschool education delivery were piloted.</li> </ul>	1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* National Programme for Preschool Strengthening-I (NPPS-I, 1995-2000) launched.</li> <li>* The Government of Mongolia submitted to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child its initial report on UNCRC implementation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Needs Assessment for social work services was conducted.</li> <li>* National and international workshops on social work education were conducted to define the nature of social work education in Mongolia.</li> <li>* "Khot Ail" shelters for street children were established.</li> <li>* "Working Children" project was launched.</li> </ul>	1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NPAP, 1996-2000) launched.</li> <li>* A preschool window was established under the Local Development Fund, NPAP.</li> <li>* The Prime Minister of Mongolia made emergency appeal for street children's shelters.</li> <li>* "Law on the Protection of the Rights of Child" was passed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Social Work Resource Centre at SPU was established.</li> <li>* The first, social work bachelor's degree programme started.</li> <li>* Pilot projects to develop school social work service models started.</li> <li>* Technical assistance project "Strengthening the NPAP" (1997-1999) started.</li> <li>* Resource centre for pre-school education established at Institute of Education Studies</li> </ul>	1997	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Pilot projects to involve children disabilities into regular kindergarten started.</li> </ul>	1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A School Social Work unit established at the MESCS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Pilot projects on child-centred training started and interactive training approaches introduced for all kindergartens.</li> </ul>	1999	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Evaluation of the NPPS-I was completed.</li> <li>* Association of Working Children 'Mandakh' was supported.</li> </ul>	2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* School Social Workers' positions were created at secondary schools, nationwide.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Educational and vocational trainings for working children were boosted.</li> <li>* Dzud emergency relief projects were implemented.</li> <li>* Protection Unit at NCAV established.</li> </ul>	2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Government of Mongolia and UNDP made Appeal for International Assistance for Dzud Relief.</li> <li>* National Programme for Preschool Strengthening-II (NPPS-II, 2001-2007) launched.</li> <li>* Mongolia ratified the ILO 182 Convention on the Elimination of Child Labor.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Process for developing "Mid-term strategy for the National Agency for Children" was started.</li> <li>* "Street children; project was evaluated and the links of services for street children were improved.</li> <li>* Alternative forms of pre-school education delivery were assessed.</li> </ul>	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* National Programme of Actions on Child Development and Protection (NPACDP, 2002-2010) was approved by Government.</li> <li>* Mongolia ratified the ILO 138 Convention on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment</li> <li>* Criminal Code was amended with a new chapter "Crimes against Children, Families, and Social Values". The new provisions of the Code identify that the exchange of children, illegal adoption, abandonment, and intentional refusal of parents to care for their children, inducement towards children to engage in worst forms of child labor as crimes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community-based models for child development and protection services were introduced.</li> <li>* Community-based rehabilitation services for children with disabilities were introduced.</li> <li>* Supported local efforts to introduce multidisciplinary-team approaches for child protection.</li> </ul>	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Inclusive Education Programme for Disabled Children was approved by the government.</li> <li>* Mongolia ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the UNCRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* For the first time in Mongolia, NGO shadow report on the implementation of UNCRC was submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.</li> </ul>	2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The Government of Mongolia submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child its second periodic report on UNCRC implementation.</li> <li>* Mid-term strategy for the National Authority for Children (renamed) was approved by Government of Mongolia. NAC adopted its new structure under the Deputy Prime Minister's oversight, with its newly revised mandate.</li> <li>* Law on Domestic Violence was newly introduced.</li> <li>* Mongolia ratified the Optional Protocol to the CRC against involving children in armed conflict.</li> <li>* Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy was adopted.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* "Children on the move: Rural-urban migration and access to education in Mongolia" research was conducted to feed into the education sector policy developments.</li> <li>* Conducted a review of the Law on Education from child rights perspective.</li> <li>* Started a nation-wide campaign to advocate for rights-based amendments to the Law on Education.</li> <li>* "Education and Child Rights" coalition was established to intensify the campaign for the rights-based amendments to the Education Law.</li> <li>* Training module for managers of preschool institutions developed and national &amp; local trainings were conducted</li> </ul>	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Law on Social Welfare was amended. The vulnerable groups of the population, including children in especially difficult circumstances are entitled to Social Welfare Fund-supported community-based social welfare services such as counselling, skills training, mediating to employment or relevant project and programs, etc.</li> <li>* "Education for All" Assessment was conducted by MESC.</li> <li>* "Child Money Programme", a targeted conditional cash transfer programme was launched by the Government (Later this was converted into an universal coverage programme).</li> <li>* The National Plan of Action on Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children and Women (2005-2015) was launched.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Supported country-wide consultations on follow up actions on the UN Concluding Observations and Recommendations given to Mongolia on UNCRC implementation.</li> <li>* "Situation analysis on education of Kazakh children" study report was launched. The need for developing bilingual learning environment for ethnic minority children was highlighted.</li> <li>* The study report was submitted to the UN on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination as supplementary information to the Government of Mongolia.</li> <li>* " Education of Kazakh children" SC project started with a component to promote the concept of bilingual education.</li> <li>* School and khoroo social work services were reviewed and proposed concrete recommendations and changes for revision of job descriptions.</li> <li>* Mongolia's National Child Protection System" review was conducted.</li> <li>* "Service standards for child care institutions" were developed and advocated for.</li> <li>* Children conducted a research "children living in Difficult Circumstances"</li> </ul>	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Law on Education was amended. The new provisions, amongst others, include requirements for education settings to be free of discrimination, and of any kind of emotional, physical punishment and economic pressure on students; and state budget allocation for primary and secondary education delivery through non formal training programs.</li> <li>* "Master Plan for Education Sector" (2006-2012) was approved.</li> <li>* In the light of UN recommendations, a comprehensive plan of actions for the second phase (2006-2008) of the NPDPC was approved by the Government.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* As per newly approved Education Thematic Plan, projects with explicit focus on developing education system free from violence were introduced.</li> <li>* Assisted development of job description for School Social Workers.</li> <li>* A concept document on child protection and child protection system was developed and submitted to the Government.</li> <li>* Guidelines, procedures and sample forms for social service contracting out to NGOs were developed and proposed for MSWL adoption.</li> </ul>	2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Code of Conduct for Teachers was introduced for the first time.</li> <li>* The implementation of the Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy was reviewed.</li> <li>* Training policy on preschool education was adopted.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Assisted in developing the Law on Preschool Education (2007-08).</li> <li>* "Child Protection Alliance" was established to advocate for a comprehensive child protection system development.</li> <li>* For the second time in Mongolia, NGO shadow report on the implementation of UNCRC was submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.</li> <li>* For the first time in Mongolia, children submitted their own shadow report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.</li> </ul>	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The Law on Preschool Education was adopted and introduced.</li> <li>* Programme on Education of Ethnic Minorities (2008-2012) was launched.</li> <li>* National Standards for Child Care Institutions was approved by a relevant government authority.</li> <li>* Government of Mongolia submitted to ILO its reports on the implementation of the ILO Conventions No. 182, 138 and 123, and Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.</li> <li>* List of jobs prohibited for minors was renewed by MSWL</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Advocacy on the provision of child rights and child protection in the new Family Law.</li> <li>* Save the Children UK Mongolia Programme was closed and SC Japan office was established.</li> </ul>	2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The Family Law being reviewed by the government for the amendment.</li> <li>* National Child Protection Strategy (2009-2014) is in progress of development.</li> </ul>





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### Photograph Descriptions

1. The Launching Day of the Positive Discipline Book
2. Save the Children staff members and supporters marching for the cause of children's rights
3. Inaugurating a kindergarten in Mandal Soum, Selenge Aimang
4. Protection Programme staff reviewing the photos to be used in a campaign effort to stop violence against children
5. Launching a new Child Centre for Street Children in Ulaanbaatar
6. A SC staff member engaged in a community-outreach in Dornod
7. The 7th batch of child graduates of the Focus on Kids Project
8. A girl engaged in a community-outreach activity on the Spank-out Day
9. A photo Club participants in the Focus on Kids Project
10. Youth leaders of the Protection Club
11. A group photo at Community-based Centre in Chingertei district, UB
12. A photo of a ger kindergarten in the countryside
13. Parents gaining knowledge and skills on Positive Discipline
14. Children meeting with a member of the Mongolian Parliament, advocating to ban corporal punishment
15. Child-led Research Team

### Зургийн тайлбар

1. "Хүүмжлийн эерэг арга. Юу? Яаж?" номын нээлт
2. Хүүхдийн эрхийн өдрийн жагсаалд ХИС-гийн ажилтнууд хүүхдүүдийн хамт
3. Сэлэнгэ аймгийн Мандал суманд шинэ цэрэглэгийн нээлт
4. Хүүхдийн эрхийн төлөөх нөлөөллийн ажилд хэрэглэх "Хүүхдийн эсрэг хүчирхийллийг нэн даруй зогсооё" ил захиудлын бэлтгэл
5. "Хүүхэд" төвийн шинэ байрны нээлт. УБ, Чингэлтэй дүүрэг
6. Дорнод аймаг дахь салбар төвийн ажилтан үйлчлүүлэгч хүүхдүүдийн хамт
7. "Хүүхэд ба дурал" сургалтын ээлжит төгсөгчид
8. "Хамгаалал" клубын гишүүн охин Хүүхдийг зодож шийтгэхийг хориглох олон улсын өдрийг сурталчилж байна
9. "Хүүхэд ба дурал" төслийн сургалтад хамрагдсан хүүхдүүд
10. "Хамгаалал" клубын залуу удирдагчид
11. Чингэлтэй дүүргийн Олон нийгэд түшиглэсэн Хүүхэд хөгжил, хамгаалал төвөөр үйлчлүүлэгч хүүхдүүд
12. Орон нутагт байгуулагдсан гэр цэрэглэгүүдийн нэг
13. Хүүмжлийн эерэг аргын сургалтанд эцэг эхчүүд олноор хамрагддаг
14. Хүүхдийн бие махбод, сэтгэл санааны шийтгэлийг хориглох асуудлаар УИХ-ын гишүүнтэй хийсэн хүүхдүүдийн уулзалт
15. "Хүнд нөхцөл дэх хүүхдийн амьдрал" хүүхэд удирдсан судалгааны багийнхан



Photos taken from the 15th Anniversary Ceremony held on July 6, 2009, to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Save the Children's services to the children in Mongolia.

Хүүхдийг Ивээх Сан Монгол Улсад хүүхдийн төлөө үйл ажиллагаа явуулж эхэлсний 15 жилийн ойд зориулсан ёслолын арга хэмжээний үеэр авсан гэрэл зургууд. 2009 оны 7 сарын 6 өдөр.

1994-2009  
**Хүүхдийн төлөө Монгол Улсад 15 жил**  
 Celebrating 15 Years of Working for the Children in Mongolia  
 Save the Childi



A group photo taken on the 15th Anniversary Ceremony held on July 6, 2009. From right to left, on the front row: Ms. N. Ayush, Director of Strategic Planning Department, Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour; Ms. Hikaru Miki, Save the Children Japan's Programme Manager for Asia I; Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, a Trustee of Save the Children UK; Dr. Bertrand Desmoulin, Representative, UNICEF Mongolia (a man standing behind Dr. Jemilah to the right); British Ambassador Ms. Thorda Abbott-Watt; Minister of Education, Culture and Science Mr. E. Otgonbayar; Mitsuaki Toyoda, Country Director, Save the Children UK in Mongolia; Vice-minister Ms. V. Udval, Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs; Ms. M. Togtokhnyam, Chairperson, National Authority for Children and fellow World Vision colleagues.

Хүүхдийг Ивээх Сангийн Монгол дахь Хөтөлгөрийн 15 жилийн ойн ёслол. 2009 оны 7 сарын 6-ны өдөр. Зүүн гар талаас эхний эгнээнд: Н.Аюуш /НХХЯ/, Мики Хикару /Японы ХИС/, Жамила Махмуд /ИБХИС/, Берtrand Десмулинс /НУБ-ын Хүүхдийн Сан/, Торда Аббот Ватт /Их Британий Элчин сайд/, М.Отгонбаяр /БСШУ-ны сайд/, Мицүаки Тоёода /ИБХИС-гийн Монгол дахь захирал/, Н.Удвал /ХЗДХ-ийн дэд сайд/, М.Тогтохням /ХТТ-ын дарга/, Дэлхийн Зөн ОУБ-ын ажилтан болон бусад хүүмүүс.