

Background

Uvurkhangai is situated near central Mongolia, with the mountains of the Khangai range in the north and desert and grassland in the south.

About 70% of the population are herder families whose herds are often destroyed by dzuds, a local term for deadly snow storms with temperatures reaching -50°C. Recurring dzuds and droughts over the past decade have devastated Mongolia's herder population.

With a chronic lack of food and essential nutrients in their diet, children in Uvurkhangai were commonly found with anaemia and rickets, a blood and skeletal disorder caused by deficiencies in iron, vitamin D and calcium. In fact, anaemia was responsible for 4% of infant deaths in 2001.

With poor education infrastructure available, children hardly went to pre-school and it was common to drop out of high school. At home and in school, there was little emphasis on personal hygiene due to a lack of awareness and sanitation facilities.

Mongolia's harsh climate, poorly developed infrastructure, persistent poverty, limited institutional capacity and nomadic herding lifestyle significantly affected the community's ability to break out of the poverty cycle.

UVURKHANGAI

AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

TOTAL POPULATION: 47,878 NUMBER OF FAMILIES: 14,227

GIRLS: 8,785 BOYS: 8,881

WOMEN: 15,106

MEN: 15,106

Project start: October 2002
Project end: September 2019

How the Journey Began

World Vision's work in Uvurkhangai began in 2002 as part of Mongolia's efforts to alleviate the poverty of households and ensure the well-being of children, who are always the most vulnerable.

After a detailed survey into the key needs of the community, World Vision rolled out development interventions targeting issues in health, economic livelihood and education by providing the infrastructure needed such as renovation of school and hospital facilities, distributing micronutrient supplements, providing housing in the form of gers to the homeless and other activities that helped alleviate the acute situation.

In later stages of programme implementation, we shifted our approach to community empowerment and participation so as to ensure sustainability of all interventions.





Stunting in Children

1999: 24.6% 2018: 9.0%



Infant Mortality

(per 1,000 live births)

2001:39.9

2015: 16.7

Food Security

Diseases related to micronutrient deficiencies were prevalent in children under five in Uvurkhangai. A nutrition survey taken at the start of the project indicated anaemia rates as high as 42%, caused by iron deficiency, and rickets rates hitting 33%, caused by vitamin D deficiency. Anaemia in mothers and infants also contributed to infant mortality rates.

World Vision implemented a nutrition programme where micronutrient supplements including vitamin D were provided to over 4,500 children under five. Over 650 children with anaemia and rickets also attended a day care strengthening programme. Each child had a customised treatment plan, following a medical check up to reverse the disease. The treatments included heliotherapy (exposure to sun rays), nutritious meals and consistent monitoring of the child's health status. These efforts saw a reduction in the burden of disease on the children.

Hand in hand with economic livelihood projects, these robust healthcare interventions worked to decrease the stunting and wasting rates in the community.

more. In total, eight hospitals were renovated and better







Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

The lack of sufficient clean water was one of the most pressing issues in Uvurkhangai. About 61.5% of households surveyed collected water from rivers and springs for their daily use and 36.6% of households took more than 30 minutes to collect water. The lack of appropriate toilets and handwashing facilities also led to poor hygiene and health conditions in the community.

World Vision constructed toilets and handwashing facilities with a clean water supply and appropriate sewage system for numerous schools in the community, which significantly improved sanitation

practices covering topics such as keeping the environment clean, handwashing techniques, how to identify health issues and take action, and other key health information. Over the years there was a 76.8 percentage point improvement in drinking water access and usage of proper sanitation facilities.

Economic Resilience





900 families

benefitted from a gardening project, enabling them to grow vegetables in the

1,620 children from 648 families

benefitted from savings groups and learned how to manage their finances to be more economically resilient against disasters and economic shocks



Graduation approach where more aggressive support helped 135 most vulnerable households and 385 children to improve their

interventions, the poverty rate went from 80% to 37%.



levels for children. Teachers and students were educated on proper health and hygiene

> Children have access to improved sanitation facilities in school

2013: 19.7%

2018: 96.5%

iously, toilets in schools were unhygienic, ippery and cold, with no handwashing

facilities. This put children at risk of disec

injury with every visit



Education & Child Protection

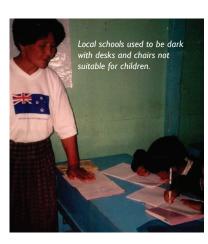
Children in Uvurkhangai faced many challenges in getting quality education. There was a lack of education facilities, school supplies, teaching materials, a high school drop-out rate and poor school and dormitory environments.

According to province statistics at the start of the project, only 17.3% of pre-school aged children attended kindergarten. Further investigation revealed that 85.0% of the children did not attend pre-school because there was no kindergarten in the area, no vacancies in existing preschools or because schools were in poor condition.

The drop-out rate for high schoolers stood high, at about 13.0% of the student population because of their parents' inability to afford school materials, a lack of interest in studying, poor health or a lack of official documents such as birth certificates.

In response to these needs, World Vision started the ger-kindergarten, where 320 children from herder families were able to access formal pre-school education for three years. The project was gradually handed over to be run by the local government and stakeholders. This initiative proved to be crucial in increasing access to pre-school education for children in the community.





To address the high drop-out rates in schools, World Vision renovated dormitories, provided schools with equipment for computer lessons and also started an informal education centre. 1,030 children who enrolled into first grade were also provided with school supplies.

World Vision established a local child protection team in three target soums, which involved soum governors, social workers, police officers and school headmasters as members of the team. The multidisciplinary team was trained in case management of at-risk families and how to deal with family issues like violence against children, neglect and addictions such as drinking and gambling.

With the cooperation of the provincial education department, World Vision trained 321 teachers in methods to improve their students' reading and comprehension skills.

IMPACT FROM 2013 to 2018



Pre-school enrolment increased

20|7 83.1%

Functional literacy improved

20 | 7 | 85.7%



School enrolment increased

2013 20.7%

20 | 7 | 98.7% |



More parents & caregivers would report a case of child abuse

2013 71.1%

20|7 78.9.%

Standing Stronger

The first time seven-year-old Gungaabaatar ever owned pencils was when his sponsor sent a parcel over to him from Singapore "I felt happy. I received letters, a bag and school stationery from my sponsor," says Gungaabaatar, beaming.

Before this, Gungaabaatar did not have his own stationery and was also hungry most of the day. The sub-zero temperatures in winter were almost unbearable for his frail body as his family was too poor to afford any coal or firewood. Gungaabaatar was one of four children of Enkhjargal, a single mother who struggled to raise her family on a monthly government allowance of S\$11 per child for ultra-poor families

Enkhjargal tried to get out of her desperate situation by attending a sewing class in 1999 but she only learnt how to produce clothes of inferior quality with hand-powered sewing machine. She worked hard at her craft but was limited by the customers that her clothes would attract

But ever since her son got sponsored, she was empowered to better care for her family. She attended various trainings that covered topics on how to run a business, financial literacy, health and sanitation and child development.

Most significantly, she received vocational training in sewing where she learnt to make traditional Mongolian clothes, as well as westernstyled clothes. In addition, she received an electric sewing machine from World Vision that transformed her business. "With the new electrical sewing machine, my work is done in double the speed so I was able to make double the profit," says Enkhjargal happily.



Motivated by the training, tools and her love for her children she worked hard at her craft and customers streamed in from far and wide, including from the capital eight hours away. Income from her flourishing business helped her provide new shoes and winter coats for her children as well as better furnish their home with a new floor, chairs and even a special plate used for Lunar New Year celebrations.

Enkhjargal is also part of the World Vision savings group where she and other members work to save money together and also help introduce customers for their microbusinesses. Equipped as an entrepreneur, Enkhjargal found another niche in the market sewing working gloves for the local coal factory so that if there's less demand for clothes, there are other avenues for her to make an income. She was also trained by World Vision to grow her own vegetables in her home garden during summer when there is a lull in her tailoring business. This helps her to save money on buying vegetables so she can put that money towards her children's education or medical hills when they fall ill

"I want to thank World Vision for supporting me and giving me more than these equipment - entrepreneurship and financial literacy training. Above all, you believed in me. I will continue to do my work and expand my business. Because of you I can take care of my family," says a happy Enkhjargal.

Besides the change in his family situation, Gungaabaatar also attended World Vision training programmes that focused or topics like character building and financial management. Through the programme, he transformed from being shy and quiet to being a confident, open and expressive boy. He also learnt about income and expenses and to use his allowance wisely.

Now, Gungaabaatar is unafraid to dream big dreams for his future "When I grow up I want to be an Information Technology Specialist," says Gungaabaatar confidently.

We couldn't have done it without you! Thank you!

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