

Hygiene and Low Cost Sanitation Improvement for the Urban Poor in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

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Over 900,000 people in peri-urban areas (called Ger districts) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia lack basic infrastructure services. Since 1997, the World Bank has supported the Government of Mongolia to improve services to Ger dwellers. A 2004 social assessment revealed that on-site sanitation is very high on the list of priorities for residents in the Ger areas. The Government of Mongolia is now addressing this problem supported by a grant from the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF). As an initial step in advancing sanitation and hygiene in the Ger areas, the World Bank has provided technical assistance to the Mongolian Government through the Sanitation, Hygiene and Wastewater Support Service (SWAT). The technical work and consultations were a first step to pave the way for a more holistic approach to improving sanitation in Ulaanbaatar's urban periphery.

BACKGROUND

Mongolia is a landlocked country of nearly two and a half million residents, 915,000 of whom live in the capital, Ulaanbaatar. The transition from a centrally planned system to a market economy has been characterized by large-scale migration of the country's traditionally nomadic population to the capital, where they have settled in the outskirts, creating vast, underserved neighborhoods.

In Mongolia, urban poverty is a relatively new phenomenon. In the former centrally planned system, most basic services were provided for free and consumer goods subsidized by the state. Poverty is generally concentrated in the "Ger Districts"—peri-urban settlements that have sprung up on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar.

LACK OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE, HYGIENE AND SANITATION IN GER AREAS

The Ger areas lack basic infrastructure services. The water supply network is

inadequate. Roads are in a permanent state of disrepair. The Ger areas are prone to flash flooding as they are situated on flood plains and hill slopes. They also suffer from water pollution from untreated sewerage that contaminates both the surface water and the groundwater due to the prevalence of poorly constructed pit latrines.

Solid waste collection is haphazard and drainage is poor. Soil and land pollution are ubiquitous as a result of open dumping of solid waste. There is no central heating. This results in poor air quality, due to pollution from thermal power plants, coal-fired cooking and heating stoves.

The urban immigration results in an increased strain of the municipality's safety nets and basic social services. The weakness of Ulaanbaatar's municipal finances prevents the municipality from rapidly expanding infrastructure service and maintenance into the Ger areas.



WORLD BANK SUPPORT

From 1997 to 2003, the World Bank supported the Government of Mongolia to respond to the new demand for improved and expanded services to the urban poor through the Ulaanbaatar Services Improvement Project. The project resulted in more reliable water supply services to about 140,000 people, by connecting water kiosks to the network, as well as other service improvements in seven ger areas.

Mongolia at a glance



Population: 2.5 million; 57% urban, 43% rural; 1% annual growth rate

Surface area: 1,566,500 km²

Life expectancy: 66 years

GNI per capita: 590 USD

Human Development Index ranking: 114 out of 177

% below the basic needs poverty line: 36.3%

% with improved water access: 62%

% with improved sanitation access: 59%

Based on the experience in this project, the Second Ulaanbaatar Service Improvement Project (USIPII) was designed.

The social assessment carried out during the preparation of USIPII revealed that on-site sanitation is very high on the list of priorities for residents in the Ger areas. Given the high cost of providing a sewerage service, the lack of indoor plumbing, and the very low water consumption in Ger areas, improved low cost on-site sanitation is the best option for improving the sanitary conditions in these residential areas.

The Government of Mongolia obtained a \$1.98 Million grant from the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) to finance low-cost sanitation and hygiene activities in the Ger areas. The JSDF grant complements the USIPII project that focuses mainly on water supply and institutional development.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

As an initial step in advancing sanitation and hygiene in the Ger areas, the World Bank has provided technical assistance to the Mongolian Government through the Sanitation, Hygiene and Wastewater Support Service (SWAT). Consultations were conducted with all key stakeholders, followed by the organizing of a national consultative workshop. The Project Management Unit, with support from the technical assistance team, guided the key stakeholders to map out the existing hygiene and sanitation situation. This included the mapping out of existing resource materials for the Ger areas.

The consultations were a novel event for Mongolia. For the first time, all key professionals and decision makers in the hygiene and sanitation sector came together to address the sanitation issues and explore the best solutions for the Ger areas.

The consultations were a first step to pave the way for a more holistic approach to improving sanitation in Ulaanbaatar's urban periphery. The national consultation workshop was followed up with a second workshop at the district level in order to share the conclusions, recommendations and validate the situation on the ground.

The overall summary of the findings and recommendations from the two consultative meetings were then shared with the Ger communities at Bayankhoshou. The consultation strengthened the participatory approach and provided a better insight and

ownership for Mongolian-led process. The consultation with the community was also used as an opportunity to test and validate the modified version of the Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation Technique (PHAST) as methodology for demand-creation.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The key recommendations identified during the consultation process were as follows:

- Develop policy and regulatory framework to support hygiene and sanitation activities.
- Establish an institutional framework that can support community-based promotion of hygiene and sanitation initiatives.
- Establish a mechanism for coordination between the government, local and international Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), donors, the private sector and users for improved services.
- Design a mechanism for "instituting learning" to share best practices.
- Develop appropriate low cost sanitation technologies for offering 'informed choice'.
- Promote community education, promotion and community-based monitoring and evaluation system.
- Ensure capacity and confidence building within the government planners and implementers and the NGOs to support community-based hygiene and sanitation activities.
- Support to create supply-chain.

IMMEDIATE OUTPUTS

The immediate outputs of the technical assistance are five documents in Mongolian that were developed with inputs from key stakeholders. These included a situation report laying out the results of the analysis of hygiene and sanitation in Ulaanbaatar's Ger areas; two manuals on low-cost technologies and promotion of hygiene and sanitation, a "Community Dialogue Toolkit" to facilitate community participation, and implementation guidelines for low cost sanitation under the JSDF grant.

EXPECTED OVERALL OUTPUTS

The outputs of the technical assistance have all been adopted for use in the JSDF-funded project. The JSDF grant will help the Government of Mongolia to pilot an enabling environment for scaling-up of implementation of low cost sanitation activities for Ger areas in Mongolia.

RELEVANT PROJECTS

Ulaanbaatar Service Improvement Project	
Country	Mongolia
Project ID	P036052
Project cost	\$18.1 million
Type	IDA
Timeframe	1997 - 2003
Status	Closed

Second Ulaanbaatar Service Improvement Project	
Country	Mongolia
Project ID	P074591
Project cost	\$22.98 million
Type	IDA
Timeframe	2004-2010
Status	Active

MORE INFORMATION

Implementation Completion Report, Ulaanbaatar Service Improvement Project, World Bank, June 2004

Project Appraisal Document, Second Ulaanbaatar Service Improvement Project, World Bank, March 2004

JSDF Project information Sheet, Community-led Infrastructure Development for the Urban Poor in Ulaanbaatar, 2004

TA reports, H. Briones, S. Lahiri and I. Battulga, December 2005 including:

- Hygiene and Sanitation Situation Report
- Manual on Hygiene and Sanitation Promotion
- Manual on Sanitation
- Community Dialogue Toolkit
- Guidelines for Implementation of Low Cost Sanitation Project in Ger Areas, Mongolia

