



**Network of
Mongolian
Volunteer
Organizations**



inspiration in action

United Nations Volunteers Mongolia



**Voluntary Service
Overseas Mongolia**

Situation Analysis and Recommendations on Promoting Volunteerism in Mongolia

International Volunteer Day



**International
Volunteer Day**

**Celebrate
volunteering**

5 December 2012

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

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Executive Summary

Background

The past couple of years in Mongolia have been dynamic in terms of embarking on a journey of **developing a favourable policy and legal framework for civil society and non-governmental organizations with direct implications to volunteerism**. There has been a growing demand from civil and volunteering organizations to develop a favourable environment to strengthen volunteering for sustainable human and social development. Volunteerism is an invaluable development asset. First and foremost, volunteers are readily available and willing manpower to respond to needs as they occur. Through volunteering experiences, volunteers themselves enhance their skills and experiences. And through volunteering activities, citizens can actively participate in the development process of their country.

Purpose and scope of the Situation Analysis

Against this background, under the leadership of the Office of the President of Mongolia, national and international volunteering and civil society organizations - led by the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) - have joined forces under the name of **Volunteerism Working Group** (here after called the “Group”), in order **to develop a common understanding about the current status of volunteering in Mongolia and thereby to determine next steps and strategic approaches to promote volunteerism and develop a volunteer infrastructure in Mongolia**. Developing a volunteer infrastructure is a comprehensive process to create a favorable and enabling environment where volunteerism can flourish. A volunteer infrastructure encompasses the systems, mechanisms and instruments needed, which could include establishing a policy, strategy, programmes, legislative and fiscal framework for volunteerism.

In this context, the **“Situation Analysis and Recommendations on Promoting Volunteerism in Mongolia 2012”** (hereinafter called the “Situation Analysis 2012”) focuses mainly on creating an enabling environment for **formal volunteering sectors** while encouraging all forms of other volunteering activity, including **informal volunteering, as civic participation**. The “Situation Analysis 2012” follows **the terminology of volunteerism provided by the United Nations Volunteers that defines the three key characteristics of volunteering activity** as: “the activity should not be undertaken primarily for financial reward, although the reimbursement of expenses and some token payment is allowed; the activity should be undertaken voluntarily, according to an individual’s own free will; the activity should be of benefit to someone other than the volunteer, or to society at large (although it is recognized that volunteering brings significant benefit to the volunteer as well).”

Note. Member organizations of the Volunteerism Working Group led by the Office of the President of Mongolia

- Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations
- United Nations Volunteers
- Voluntary Service Overseas
- Mongolian Red Cross
- Australian Red Cross
- Democracy Education Center (DEMO)
- Service for Peace
- World Vision International

Methodology and structure

To assess the current status of volunteering in Mongolia, the Group conducted the Survey on Volunteerism during June 2012 (hereinafter called the “Survey 2012”), both online and offline including 79 organizations and 1,000 Mongolian student. At the same time, the Group carried out a desk review of all existing information about volunteerism in Mongolia, together with study on international frameworks for developing a volunteer infrastructure and an international comparative analyses looking at international examples and best practice of promoting volunteering around the world. In order to inform and listen to public opinions and views on the findings of the Survey and research on volunteerism in Mongolia, the “Citizens’ Hall Open Discussion on Volunteerism” at the Government House was organized on 24 October 2012. It was hosted by the Office of the President and co-organized by the Ministry of Labor, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations (NMVO). Following the results of public consultation at the “Citizens’ Hall Open Discussion on Volunteerism”, “Joint Recommendations on Development a Volunteer Infrastructure and Promoting Volunteerism in Mongolia” were developed by the Group as the final outcome of the Situation Analysis.

Note. About the Citizens’ Hall

The Citizens’ Hall under the President of Mongolia is a mechanism for public hearings on proposed legislation, regulations and decrees to be initiated by the President, encouraging and ensuring open and transparent civic participation in the decision-making process. It is based on a democratic principle of access to and freedom of information. The main form of Citizens’ Hall activity is open discussion. The participants of the open discussions can be citizens of Mongolia, representatives of legal entities and organizations and representatives of foreign and international organizations and business entities operating in Mongolia. More information is available from <http://www.president.mn/eng/civilHall/civil-hall-procedures.php#>

Following the Introduction and Background, the “Situation Analysis 2012” is structured around three Chapters as follows:

Chapter I. International Framework on Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure explains what international frameworks on developing a volunteer infrastructure exist as guidance, and what approaches and steps need to be taken. It is based on a literature review, research and analyses of a wide range of publications by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), which is produced in partnership with international volunteer-involving organizations, as well as individual country volunteerism policies, laws, studies and reports. It starts with providing key terminologies related to volunteerism and the volunteering sector identified by international community and the United Nations. It clarifies the interconnected concepts of “Voluntary action” and “Civil Society and Volunteering and Non-Governmental Organizations”. The key factors in developing a volunteer infrastructure are described as a comprehensive process to create an enabling environment for civil society and volunteering organizations. It provides guidance on taking practical measures which include: (a) reaching a common understanding of volunteerism and a shared appreciation of its value through public dialogue and discussion and documentation on volunteerism in Mongolia; (b) establishing a favourable policy and regulatory framework to develop and strengthen the volunteering sector and activities and to promote and recognize benefits of volunteerism to inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development; (c) establishing national volunteerism coordination mechanisms with appointment or creation of a responsible entity; (d) building national volunteer development center(s); (e) creating national volunteerism web portal; and (f) promoting volunteerism.

Chapter II. Mongolian Situation Analyses describes the findings of the Mongolian situation analyses based on the “Survey 2012” and research and studies on the existing information on volunteerism in Mongolia. It explains about the current political and economic context for volunteering; current profile of volunteering; current national infrastructure for volunteering; current regulatory and fiscal environment for volunteering; past initiatives and lessons learnt; and what needs to be done to promote and strengthen volunteering. While informal volunteering in Mongolia has been rooted in its long tradition, a shift towards more formal volunteering was noted in recent years. This involves volunteering activities within an organizational framework such as civil society and non-governmental organisations. There is a growing interest in volunteering activities by Mongolian nationals in a wide range of sectors. However, the Mongolian public have a limited understanding of volunteering and the benefits it can bring. In this regards, increasing the visibility of formal volunteering could do a lot to encourage more of it to happen. The “Survey 2012” revealed the major barriers to volunteering in Mongolia which includes the absence of national volunteerism coordination mechanism and a responsible government entity. In addressing this issue, there was a suggestion to create a national volunteer center.

Chapter III. Public Consultation at Citizens’ Hall and Joint Recommendations elaborates on “Joint Recommendations on Development of a Volunteer Infrastructure and Promoting Volunteerism in Mongolia” developed by the Group as the final outcome of the Situation Analysis. The Joint Recommendations are directed at the President and the Office of the President, the State Great Khural (National Parliament) and the Government. The purpose of the Joint Recommendations is to determine and clarify the prioritized need areas in promoting volunteering and developing a volunteer infrastructure in Mongolia as guidance on steps to be taken by the Government and civil society and volunteering sector in close partnerships. The Joint Recommendations focus on the following issues: (a) establishing a national volunteerism policy/state concept paper. This could formulate (i) a favourable legal framework (2) sustainable public financing (3) national volunteering development strategy. This should be integrated into the National Development Plan; (b) allocating requisite and sustainable funding to support volunteering in the annual Government budget; (c) institutionalizing a national volunteerism coordination mechanism at the national and local levels; (d) amending and improving the existing laws by incorporating provisions related to “volunteerism”, “volunteers”, “volunteering activities”, and “civil society and volunteer involving organizations”; and (e) establishing practical measures to encourage volunteering activities in as diverse sectors as possible.

In the process, the Ministry of Labor presented its commitment to moving forward with the agenda of volunteerism for inclusive and sustainable social development and working towards taking appropriate measures to develop a favorable volunteer infrastructure in Mongolia in close collaboration with other ministries and government offices and civil society and volunteering organizations.

Abbreviations

Civil society organizations (CSOs)

International Volunteer Day (IVD)

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations (NMVO)

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)

Volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs)

Introduction and Background

The need to enhance volunteerism in Mongolia for sustainable human and social development

Witnessed by rapid growth of GDP in recent years, Mongolia has acquired middle income country status. In spite of the recent rapid economic growth, almost 30% of the population is below the national poverty line, income inequality has increased, there is considerable regional disparity, nearly one in four young people are unemployed, and a significant proportion of the population is vulnerable to disasters and income fluctuations. Mongolia's most significant development challenge emerges as “how to convert economic growth into poverty reduction and social development?”. Overcoming the natural resource curse and transforming its mineral endowment into renewable assets for sustainable and broad-based development will be key to Mongolia’s development.

Promoting volunteerism in Mongolia can be used to address various development challenges and development priorities defined by the Government of Mongolia. Volunteerism can enable active civil society participation and socially inclusive and participatory development. As stated in **the Policy and Action Programme of the President of Mongolia 2009-2013**, the President is committed to promoting participatory and open forms of development, and supporting Mongolian Citizens to actively fulfil their full potentials. Creating an enabling environment for volunteering activities could be a strategic investment to strengthen human and social capital.

The need to develop a national volunteer infrastructure within the context of the latest developments in creating an enabling environment for strengthening civic participation in Mongolia

The past couple of years in Mongolia have been dynamic in terms of embarking on a journey of developing a favourable policy and legal framework for civil society and NGOs with direct implications to volunteerism. The summary of developments is as follows:

- **The amendment process of the 1997 Law on NGOs in Mongolia in 2012:** The Government has instructed the Office of the President to undertake a comprehensive review of the legislations related to NGOs and CSOs, which not only include the 1997 Law on NGOs per se but also all legislation related to effective performance of NGOs and CSOs and their employees and volunteers including laws on tax and social insurance.
- **The draft Law on Public Benefits Activities (PBA) in 2012:** A Working Group formed under the Office of the President has drafted the PBA which is about how to manage social development service delivery by CSOs, NGOs and volunteering sectors. The PBA elaborates on a mechanism and institutional structure to manage public grants including establishing the Public Benefits Activities Foundation as an independent body for the distribution of funding to CSOs, NGOs and volunteering sectors.
- **The “Strategic Policy Paper on Decentralization based on Direct Democracy and Citizens’ Participation over the medium to long term 2012-2022”:** Adopted by the Presidential Decree No. 176 on 21 September 2012, the Strategy Policy Paper is based on the Constitution of Mongolia, Article 3 stating that “the Mongolian people shall exercise their rights through their direct participation in state affairs as well as through the representative bodies of the State authority

elected by them.” The implementation strategy involves developing a favorable legal framework for formalization of citizen participation and requisite state systems and supportive organizational structure and organizing public information dissemination campaigns, aimed at citizen education about the importance of participation and how to participate. Promoting active participation by different groups of citizens is laid out including “creating a nationwide network of voluntary groups that will spread the values of direct democracy, promote citizen participation”.

- **The Civil Society Council (CSC) established in 2008:** As a response to persistent demands from Mongolia’s civil society actors, Mongolia’s Civil Society Council (CSC) was established on 1 February 2008. On 26 March 2008, the first ever Cooperation Agreement was signed between the Government and the CSC marking it as an officially recognized liaison unit representing the common goals of over 100 NGOs, trade unions, civic and human rights movements and coordinating their activities. The organizational structure of the CSC comprises four sub-Civic Councils (CCs) and one Working Group (WG) for different sectors. These are the Environment Civic Council, the Education, Culture and Science Civic Council, the Health Civic Council, the Defense Civic Council, and the Social Welfare and Labour Working Group. These Civic Councils were formed in different times and each CC is headed by the Council Director and has its own government counterpart and CSOs memberships following its sectoral interest. The CSC’s representative, networking and coordination functions are limited and hardly known amongst international development partners in Mongolia. This is due to lack of capacity in terms of financial and human resources.

Note. The position of Government and United Nations development assistance framework in Mongolia pertinent to strengthening civil society and non-governmental organizations with implications to volunteerism:

- **H.E. Tsakhia Elbegdorj, President of Mongolia expressed that “*Citizens participation is critical for social development. We must support the activities of the Non-governmental Organizations.*”** (30 May 2012, The Office of the President of Mongolia <http://www.president.mn/eng/newsCenter/viewNews.php?newsId=711>)
- **The Government Action Plan 2012-2016** refers to “*adopting a new law on activities good for the society, and create new financing alternatives for civil society organizations.*” And “For the policy aimed to ensure **youth development**, establish a National Government Committee responsible for formulating, implementing and overseeing relevant policy.”
- **The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2016** co-signed by the Government of Mongolia and the United Nations in Mongolia identified **mainstreaming civic participation through volunteerism** as one of five cross cutting issues across all areas of development programming. It states that “ongoing efforts are needed to mainstream the **role of civil society** across all programmatic areas and to promote dialogue with the government on development and human rights issues. The UN Country Team will build on its strong involvement with civil society organizations (CSOs) to help establish formal and informal consultative mechanisms, and to facilitate wider civic participation in development, especially for children and young people. CSOs derive much of their membership from volunteers. The UN will promote and support **volunteerism** as a means for citizens to contribute to development and public service.”

CHAPTER I. International Framework on Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure

The importance and benefits of volunteerism for development is formally recognized by international community and promoted by the United Nations system with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) as the lead UN agency. This Chapter explains what international frameworks on developing a volunteer infrastructure exist as guidance, and what approaches and steps need to be taken if Mongolia were to develop one. It is based on a literature review, research and analyses of a wide range of publications by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), which is produced in partnership with international volunteer-involving organizations, as well as individual country volunteerism policies, laws, studies and reports.

“Developing a volunteer infrastructure” is a comprehensive process to create a favourable and an enabling environment where volunteerism can flourish. A volunteer infrastructure encompasses the systems, mechanisms and instruments needed, which could include establishing a policy, strategy, programmes, legislative and fiscal frameworks for volunteerism. It could practically involve establishing physical volunteer development centers at the national and local levels. It could also involve creating a national volunteering web portal, which provides matching services between volunteers and volunteer seeking organizations. In order to start developing a volunteer infrastructure, first, there should be a common understanding of volunteerism and shared appreciation of its values amongst different actors involved in the country. It is recommended that the development of a national volunteer infrastructure should evolve through dialogue and collaboration among the main stakeholders – government, civil society and volunteering organizations, private sector and development cooperation agencies etc. While different countries have different political, economic, social and cultural contexts within which rather different steps could be taken, it is worth looking at international frameworks on standard approaches which are extracted from consolidated best practices of many different countries in the world.

Why volunteerism now? The United Nations definition of volunteerism identified by the international community

The values and forms of volunteerism identified by the international community are reflected in **the United Nations General Assembly recommendations. Following the International Year of Volunteers in 2001 and the 10th anniversary of International Year of Volunteers in 2011**, the international community represented at the UN General Assembly recognized the value and benefits of volunteerism. **“Volunteerism is an essential component of any strategy that recognizes that progress cannot be measured solely in terms of economic return.”** (e.g. in order to achieve the development goals and objectives set out in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) including poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management, social integration and overcoming social exclusion and discrimination).

- **Definition of “Volunteerism” by the United Nations: Volunteerism is a fundamental source of community strength and resilience** that exists in all societies throughout the world. Volunteerism is expressed **through a wide range of activities**, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery, campaigning and advocacy, as well as other **forms of civic participation**. **The UN General Assembly defines volunteerism as a form of social behavior undertaken of free will, for the general public good** (which benefits the community and society at large as well as the volunteer), **and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor**.

- **Definition of “Volunteerism” by the United Nations Volunteers:** UNV embraces volunteerism as **universal and inclusive**, and recognizes **volunteerism in its diversity** as well as **the values** that sustain it: **free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity**. Volunteerism is **a powerful means of engaging people** in tackling development challenges, and it can **transform the pace and nature of development**. Volunteerism **benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer** by **strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens**, and by purposefully **creating opportunities for participation**. Volunteerism encourages **social inclusion** in societies and that provides an environment for **sustainable development**.
- As the **State of the World’s Volunteerism Report 2011** explains that “**universality of volunteerism is a driving force for a people-centred approach to development**, as well as the important role of volunteerism in **advancing societal well-being and progress**”. “Volunteering not only delivers peace and development results, it is uniquely able to impact on the inner lives of individuals, communities and societies, binding them with bonds of **trust and reciprocity**. Volunteerism provides **opportunities for all people to be active agents of positive change**. Volunteers promote cooperation and contribute to the well-being of individuals and of society as a whole. **Active participation** empowers people from the grassroots up, especially when supported by strong partnerships at every level.” (Excerpt from Statement by UNV Executive Coordinator, Flavia Pansieri, on International Volunteer Day 2011)

On the occasion of the **10th anniversary of International Year of Volunteers on 5 December 2011**, the **UN General Assembly adopted a resolution** with recommendations to develop an enabling environment for volunteerism at the global, national and local level. The Government of Mongolia also endorsed this resolution and thereby is bound to take measures to start **developing a favourable volunteer infrastructure in Mongolia** and is responsible for consolidating its position on what government support actions are to be taken in the following years.

Note. Key terminologies related to volunteerism

- **Core values of volunteerism:** Compassion, cooperation and solidarity.
- **Active social engagement reflected by varying expressions of volunteering:**
 - Mutual aid or self-help;
 - Philanthropy or service to others;
 - Participation or civic engagement;
 - Advocacy or campaigning.

Interconnected concepts of “Voluntary action” and “Civil Society and Volunteering and Non-Governmental Organizations”

Since developing a volunteer infrastructure deals with formal volunteering sector as well as informal volunteering activities, it is necessary to clarify what the volunteering sector involves both conceptually and practically. When we talk about volunteerism and volunteering activities, people tend to distinguish it from activities by non-governmental organizations and broad based civil society. It is worth reminding ourselves of the conceptual and practical connectedness between them.

Voluntary action is at the core of social capital and underpins most social action in civil society. It occurs spontaneously, as is often the case during natural disasters where citizens come forward to voluntarily assist the victims of floods, earthquakes or forest fires. It is also **expressed through civil society organizations (CSOs)**. CSOs encompass a very broad range of types and serve an array of constituencies. However, one

common feature is that **their roots lie in volunteerism**. People **join non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to volunteer** a wide range of services in every field covered by the MDGs. People also volunteer to serve in the governance structures of the organizations themselves. Volunteerism is also present, in a less visible way, through membership in innumerable **grass-roots associations** found in every part of the globe. (“Developing a Volunteer Infrastructure: Guidance Note”, UNV)

Note. Key terminologies related to volunteering sector

- **Volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs):** Volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs) involve any organizations from civil society, academia, the media, private or public sectors, through which individuals choose to volunteer as an expression of active civic engagement.
- **“Voluntary sector”** refers to those sectors in a society that organize themselves into volunteers to undertake advocacy and action primarily for local and national development as well as international cooperation and understanding.
- **“Voluntary organization”** is defined as an ‘institutional reality’ (i.e. having a legal status or an organizational permanency), private and non-governmental, operating on a non-profit basis, self-governing, non-compulsory with regards to membership or affiliation, participation and financial contributions.
- **“Volunteer service origination”** refers to a local or foreign group that recruits, trains, deploys and supports volunteer workers to programs and projects implemented by them or by other organizations or any group that provides services and resources, including but not limited to, information, capability building, advocacy and networking for the attainment of the common good.
- **Definition of civil society and civil society organizations (CSOs) provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):** “Civil society unites people to advance shared goals and interests. Civil society actors are non-state actors whose aims are neither to generate profits nor to seek governing power. Civil society organizations (CSOs) constitute a third sector, existing alongside and interacting with the state and profit-seeking firms. In practice, civil society is an arena of both collaboration and contention whose configurations may vary according to national setting and history and encompasses a wider range of formal and informal organizations engaged in development work, for example: NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), indigenous peoples and indigenous peoples’ organizations, academia, journalist associations, faith-based organizations, charitable organizations, professional trade unions, trade associations, professional membership associations, women’s and social movements, support organizations and networks or federations of such organizations. CSOs do not include the mass media and transnational corporations.”

Key factors in developing a volunteer infrastructure as a comprehensive process to create an enabling environment for civil society and volunteering organizations

- **Reaching a common understanding of volunteerism and a shared appreciation of its value** through public dialogue and discussion and documentation on volunteerism in Mongolia:
 - **Development of research, analysis, models, best practices** etc. with respect to volunteering (e.g. comprehensive study and research on volunteerism, profiling and database on volunteering sectors, measurement of contribution of volunteering activities to socio-economic development etc.).
 - **Dissemination of information** on the benefits of volunteering.
- **Establishing a favourable policy and regulatory framework** to develop and strengthen the volunteering sector and activities and to promote and recognize the benefits of volunteerism to inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development.
 - To establish a favourable policy and regulatory framework on volunteerism, we have to ask ourselves key implementation-oriented questions. Such as, during what timeline we want

to implement policy and regulation when we are to have one? Who will be responsible for implementation? What will national volunteerism coordination mechanisms be like? Do we need to appoint or create a new responsible entity for administering and coordinating partnerships among government entities and volunteer involving organizations (VIOs)? Should it be government body or civil entity? What kinds of financial support should be provided to VIOs? What are the currently existing laws or regulations affecting volunteers? What should be added and amended to enable volunteering, or is formulation of new law on volunteering required?

- **Establishing national volunteerism coordination mechanisms by appointment or creation of a responsible entity:**
 - To establish a national volunteerism coordination mechanism, first, we have to clarify who will be doing what amongst various actors of government at the central and local level, civil society and volunteering organizations, academia, media and private sectors. While examining the existing government structure and mechanism, decisions should be made on what form of responsible entity is to administer and coordinate partnerships for volunteerism across sectors.

Case Study: Macedonia's National Council for Development of Volunteering (NCDV)



Taking a good example from Macedonia, **the National Strategy for Promotion and Development of Volunteering and Action Plan 2010-15** was developed in order to implement a previously adopted volunteerism law. The National Strategy established institutional support for volunteering by creating the National Council for Development of Volunteering (NCDV) to lead the implementation of the Strategy. NCDV is tasked with the promotion and development of volunteering as socially useful activity, planning of specific measures and monitoring the development of volunteering. NCDV is funded by the Macedonian Government and has specific terms of office and rules of procedures and comprises multi-sector representations. Out of 9 members, 5 representatives are from ministries and government offices (nominated from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Education, Agency for Youth and Sport, Unit for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations under the General Secretariat of the Government, Association of the units of local-self government of the Republic of Macedonia) and 4 from civil society and volunteering organizations including academia and the media. While NCDV is working as the national volunteerism coordination entity, there was a leading ministry behind it, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in Macedonia, who issued the National Strategy and provided administrative and technical support to NCDV.

- **Establishing national, regional and/or local volunteer development center(s):**
 - As a physical space, this could be established as a national volunteer development center in the capital city and also regional and local volunteer development centers in every aimag. It could also start as a pilot youth volunteer development center.
 - A volunteer development center could be used as an active arm of implementation of policy and regulation by, for example, promoting and facilitating volunteering activities, coordinating and networking amongst civil society and volunteering organizations, generating and distributing information on volunteerism, providing trainings and matching services between volunteers and volunteer-hosting entities. This should be in addition to a national volunteerism

coordination mechanism/entity, responsible for formulating policy, and a legislative and fiscal framework for volunteerism at the national level.

Case Study: International examples of volunteer centers from the “Laws and Policies Affecting Volunteerism since 2001” (2009, UNV)



“Creation of national volunteer centers or councils has served to promote and facilitate volunteerism and provide information, training, education, and CSO-volunteer matching services in various countries. This is by far the most common step to promote volunteerism, taken in dozens of countries including Australia, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, El Salvador, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Peru, South Korea, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, and Zambia. In Thailand alone, more than 75 centers were established - one for each province in the country... The purposes, responsibilities and structures of these bodies differ and depend upon the reasons for their establishment and the functions they perform. In general they are responsible for implementation of a law or policy and coordination of activities regarding promotion of volunteering. Often they are composed of representatives from government, civil society, and the private sector - thus ensuring that different needs and positions are represented and considered in the implementation of activities.”

- **Creating a national volunteering web portal** to facilitate volunteer networking and linking potential volunteers with various types of volunteering sectors and to serve as an information and knowledge platform.

Case Study: Volunteering website from the United Kingdom at www.do-it.org.uk



Launched in 2000, www.do-it.org.uk is the most comprehensive national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK. The opportunities are provided by over 350 Volunteer Centers in England and more than 300 national and regional charities, representing 28,000 organizations. The website has received funding from the UK Government since its launch, as well as other sources such as the National Lottery and donations. The website includes general information and advice about volunteering for both potential volunteers and organizations who need them, as well as a matching service. In the **matching service**, organizations which need volunteers input their information. A potential volunteer can then type in their details – where they live, when they have free time, what activities they would like to do and so on, and the website will suggest suitable volunteering opportunities. This makes it easy for anyone online to connect to volunteering opportunities. Every 45 seconds someone in the UK finds a volunteering opportunity thanks to Do-it. Research shows that over 30% of these people would not have started volunteering without Do-it.

- **Taking practical measure to recognize, promote and facilitate volunteerism:** How to promote and recognize the contribution made by volunteers in society and thereby encourage active participation by diverse citizens in volunteering? (e.g. celebration of International Volunteer Day on 5 December; media promotion of volunteerism and training the media on including messaging about volunteerism; information and promotion campaigns; incorporation of volunteerism into national curriculum (Lebanon); volunteer awareness and training programmes in schools (Russia); hosting of “Global forum for Volunteer Work” with representatives from around the world (Saudi

Arabia); volunteer management training and capacity building programme; gather case studies and best practices on volunteerism; database of VIOs and volunteering opportunities in different fields; publication of volunteering booklet to ensure that key provisions of the law are correctly implemented etc.)

Case Study: The International Award for Young People at www.intaward.org



The International Award for Youth People is a self-development programme available to all 14 to 25 year olds. Over 7 million young people in over 130 countries have taken up the Award challenge, which includes meeting goals in physical recreation and development of a skill or hobby, as well as completing a certain number of hours of volunteering for each level (bronze, silver and gold). In many countries, the award is sponsored by the Head of State or President. The Award is run by volunteers. Schools, youth organizations and clubs, companies, sports clubs and other agencies can all make use of the Award to provide a balanced programme of activities for young people. For participants, the main reward is a great sense of personal achievement. They gain new skills and experiences; learn that volunteering can be fun and fulfilling, and contribute to their community. More tangibly they receive a prestigious badge and certificate to mark their achievement. For adult volunteers, there is the satisfaction of knowing they helped young people to develop themselves and contributed in a worthwhile way to the community. Lives are changed for both young people and adult volunteers.

CHAPTER II. Mongolian Situation Analysis

1. Current political and economic context for volunteering

Political context and government structure

The President of Mongolia is the head of State and the Prime Minister is the head of Government in a multi-party system. The Government exercises executive power, whilst legislative power is vested in Parliament. Presidential and Parliamentary elections are held every four years respectively to elect the President and 76 Members of Parliament (State Great Khural) which appoints the Prime Minister. The latest Parliamentary election was held on 28 June 2012 and the next Presidential election will be in May 2013. The Parliamentary Elections in June 2012 resulted in the Democratic Party obtaining the largest number of seats in Parliament. Thirteen Ministers and the Prime Minister, N. Altankhuyag, were appointed from the Democratic Party, with one Minister from the Civil Will and Green Party and four Ministers from the Justice Coalition of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and the Mongolian National Democratic Party. Administratively, Mongolia is divided into 21 aimags and the capital city; 21 aimags are divided into 330 soums and 1575 baghs; the capital city of Ulaanbaatar is divided into 9 districts and 135 sub-districts (khoroos). The sub-national or local self-governing body of aimags, capital city, soums and districts is the Citizens' Representatives' Hural (Local Council).

Presidential support for strengthening volunteering is currently very strong within the President's focused action agenda on enhancing public participation and democracy. Despite greater efforts at transparency, the country is struggling to establish a culture of accountability. Although outspoken, media and civil society have a limited capacity to serve as a check on Government. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Mongolia 120 out of the 183 countries measured. The Worldwide Governance Indicators reflect a deterioration of all indicators over the past decade, except in regulatory quality.

Economic context

Mongolia is experiencing a rapid economic transformation that is generated by mineral discoveries. Since its transition to democracy in 1990, real GDP per capita in Mongolia has more than doubled. The economy grew by 17.3% in 2011, compared to 6.4% GDP growth in 2010. While Mongolia has acquired a middle income country status, Mongolia's most significant development challenges in recent years is "how to convert economic growth into poverty reduction and social development?", overcoming the natural resource curse and transforming its mineral endowment into renewable assets for sustainable and broad-based development. The mining boom is increasing opportunities for greater corruption and could drive policymaking towards more populism and patronage with the effect of deteriorated social cohesion.

Political and economic context with implications to volunteering

- **Opportunities:**
 - Potential growth of the volunteering population with a growing middle class who might want to participate in volunteering activities.
 - Improved internet access, at least amongst urban populations, making dissemination of information about volunteering opportunities increasingly easy. According to a recent National Statistical Office report in 2012, 26% of Mongolians reported having used the internet in 2010, and the number is growing fast.

- The Ministry of Labor, newly created after the 2012 election, is committed to providing government support to promote volunteering in Mongolia.
- **Challenges:**
 - As Mongolia becomes richer and more developed, foreign governments are reducing the number of international volunteers being deployed to Mongolia. For example, Mongolia's newly acquired status as a "middle income country" was a factor in the scheduled withdrawal of Voluntary Service Overseas in Mongolia by 2014. As fewer international volunteers work in Mongolia, there is a growing need to prepare skilled and motivated Mongolian volunteers.
 - Support for volunteering does not appear on party political agendas. Support for developing the volunteering sector is more likely to be based on personal interests in volunteering by key political actors rather than being initiated by structured political agendas.

2. Current profile of volunteering

Brief history of volunteering in Mongolia

Mongolia's cultural traditions stem from its roots in a nomadic lifestyle and local volunteering has been widely practiced for centuries. But societal changes over the past decades have disrupted traditional practice. The traditional meaning of volunteering in Mongolian "*Sain duryghan, sain duryn uil ajillagaa*" expresses the idea of "people working based on one's own will, activities carried out by these people". The oldest traditional forms of civil societies involving volunteerism have long existed, referred to as "*niigem*" / community, labor unions, communist party of youth, professional organizations like writers' unions, sport and cultural unions, etc. During socialist times, when these civil societies were operating under the strictest control of the state, volunteerism, which had always been freely given, suddenly became mandatory resulting in the breakdown of traditional family support systems and other informal types of volunteering. The perception of volunteerism was distorted and appreciation for volunteerism was relatively low and not always positive (for example, many people considered that volunteering was only for those who cannot find a real job, according to the "Research Study on Volunteerism and Its Impact on the Social Welfare Sector in Mongolia", 2003, Real Okenye). Since the democratic and market oriented transition in early 1990s, people's attitude to volunteering have been slowly changing, although some of these negative connotations of volunteering persist.

Shift towards increased formal volunteering in Mongolia

There is limited existing research on the current size, profile and work areas of the current volunteer workforce on Mongolia, but the evidence that does exist suggests a shift in recent years from less formal to more formal volunteerism. In 2001, volunteering was seen by 70% of the population as a vital dimension of democratic and social life and as essential to the growth of civic participation, social solidarity and individual self-development (according to the Statistical Information and Research Department of the Governor's Office of the Capital City, 2001). The existing research base suggests that around 55% of the Mongolia population volunteer their time *informally* outside their immediate family for friends and local community, for example, assisting elderly neighbours (according to CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Mongolian). This is likely to be mainly in a very informal way and may be decreasing over time with increasing urbanisation and less strong community ties. However, the number of formally registered NGOs has grown rapidly to reach over 6,000 in 2012, since the fall of communism and the Law in NGOs passed in

1997. More formal volunteering within non-governmental organizations appears to be increasing. There is also some evidence of an increase in faith based volunteerism and spontaneous volunteerism in response to natural disasters.

The “Survey on Volunteerism”, “Citizens’ Hall Open Discussion on Volunteerism” and research conducted in 2012: Demography of volunteers and the volunteering sector

The Survey on Volunteerism conducted during June 2012 (hereinafter called the “Survey 2012”) showed that volunteer-involving organisations had a fairly good understanding about what volunteering is. For example, out of 79 respondents none considered a volunteer to be “someone who cannot find a paid job” and the majority of respondents made reference to features of the UN definition of volunteering when asked what volunteering was. However, some respondents associated volunteering with foreign activities and not something Mongolians do themselves. Nonetheless, there are signs for **optimism for growth of volunteering workforce in Mongolia**. In the Survey 2012, around 60% of students expressed that they had volunteering experiences and around 75% were interested in volunteering in the future, yet identified with common barriers as having lack of free time and lack of information about volunteering opportunities.

The “Survey 2012” highlights the enormous contribution currently being made by national volunteers to the development of Mongolia. Out of 79 organizations surveyed, there were 20,136 volunteers formally volunteering within an organizational framework and 2,737,000 hours of volunteer time are given this year. **The equivalent economic contribution of these recorded volunteering hours is estimated at around 4.8 billion Tugriks.** (based on the figure of average monthly wage of MNT308,000 available at the National Statistical Office http://www.nso.mn/v3/index2.php?page=news_more&id=286). This economic figure of the contribution of volunteering is likely to be a significant underestimation of the real picture, since the Survey 2012 was far from exhaustive.

The “Survey 2012” captured demographic information about population segments of volunteers in Mongolia. Volunteering activity is spread relatively evenly between the following groups of population - students, working people, unemployed people and retired people - with a minority of volunteers being children. The majority of volunteers at around two thirds are women. Except for a few organizations who only work with foreign volunteers, around two thirds of volunteers were from Ulaanbaatar and one third from elsewhere in Mongolia.

There are some good examples of the socially marginalized segments of the Mongolian population being actively engaging in volunteerism. For example, the Mongolian Women’s fund regularly recruits volunteers who have previously been recipients of support to overcome domestic violence. Their former experiences make them well suited to supporting other women in the same situation. In addition, the National Center for Vocational Training and Rehabilitation for the Disabled People have successfully placed volunteers, including volunteers who themselves have disabilities. The National Association of the Blind and the Association of Wheelchair Users are also very active in Mongolia. During the Citizens Hall debate, stakeholders stressed the importance of ensuring that disabled people are seen as potential volunteers, not simply potential beneficiaries of volunteer action.

The “Survey 2012” also revealed information about organizations managing volunteers and volunteer assignments. The major types of organizations managing volunteers were NGOs. The main sectors of NGOs involving volunteers were education, health, human rights and social care. The main functional areas of volunteering activities were training, social work, lobbying and office work and practical activities such as environmentally friendly work. In addition, common perceptions by the general public about types of

volunteering activities in Mongolia included giving blood, planting trees, street cleaning, distributing donations, and giving information and practical help to disadvantaged groups including disabled people. More specialized volunteering activities were also recognized by the general public, such as teaching English, training, NGO capacity building, human resource development, monitoring, supporting good governance and writing project proposals.

Looking at the civil society sector more broadly, research conducted in 2012 suggests that the sector has become increasingly diverse and vibrant but is confined by a lack of sustainable funding and managerial and organizational capacity. Lack of funding, particularly long term and core funding both for specific project and administration and organization, is a common constraint to civil society and non-governmental organizations. There are many organizations who would like to work with volunteers yet lack financial and technical capacity to organize and manage volunteers and volunteer assignments.

According to the “Survey 2012”, responding organizations identified the benefits of volunteering in the following three dimensions:

- **Benefits to the volunteer hosting organizations:** Volunteers’ contributions were considered as added value in building capacity and providing expertise to the host organizations. Volunteers brought in “outside eye” to the work of an organization and improved work ethics of full time employees inspired by volunteerism. International volunteers contributed to transferring English language skills and fostering good will.
- **Benefits to community and society in large:** Community volunteers helped to facilitate better community outreach due to their understanding of target groups – if a volunteer is from a certain community they will be able to better connect with people from that community than an outsider. This can allow enhanced ownership of community development programmes by drawing on direct community participation.
- **Benefits to volunteers themselves:** Volunteering experiences provided volunteers themselves with opportunities to improve knowledge and learn new skills and acquire life experiences. This can improve their future employment prospects.

3. Current national infrastructure for volunteering

In terms of national volunteering infrastructure, there exists no national volunteerism policy, strategic, legal or fiscal framework and there is no focal point in the Government that deals with volunteer issues or promotes volunteering for development. There is no national volunteer center or platform/umbrella organization with such functions as matching volunteer hosting organizations with volunteers or publicizing volunteer opportunities.

The closest Mongolia has to an umbrella volunteer involving organizations is the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations (NMVO). NMVO was established in 2004 as a non-profit membership organization comprising over 30 non-governmental organizations involving volunteers. It has been a member of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) since 2011. The purpose and mission of the Network is to enhance awareness and recognition of volunteering as an essential force for development and positive change in Mongolia. The major activities of the Network include bringing together Mongolian volunteering organizations to share experiences, building partnerships and forming a unified voice for

volunteering, raising public awareness about the importance and benefits of volunteering activities, advocating for government and institutionalized support for the volunteering sector, and strengthening volunteer management and the quality of volunteering work by organizing capacity building training sessions for volunteering organizations and producing and disseminating information on volunteerism. However, the scope and level of the Network activities are very limited in terms of representation of all relevant organizations. They also lack requisite financial and human resources for their work.

Fast Fact on the Network activities in 2012:

- **16,946 volunteers** took part in various volunteering activities organized by the Network.
- The total volunteering hours by the Network volunteers is estimated at **2,576,500 hours**.
- The estimated contribution of volunteering through the Network organizations to the Mongolian economy reaches **MNT 4.5 billion**.
- These figures represent the majority of the volunteers and volunteering hours captured in the “Survey 2012”.
- **Annual performance assessment of member organizations of the Network** using a “Basic Volunteer Management System Benchmarking Tool” has been conducted since 2008.
- **Annual Best Volunteering Awards Ceremonies** have been organized by the Network on the occasions of celebrating International Volunteer Day (IVD) on 5 December since 2008.

The National Statistic Office (NSO) of Mongolia has decided to embark on a project to develop official measures of the nonprofit sector (inclusive of civil society and the volunteering sector), with the technical backstopping to be provided by the Center for Civil Society Studies of the John Hopkins University in the United States of America. The project is scheduled to start during early December 2012 after the formation of a multi-sector technical working group led by the NSO. Once a comprehensive database and statistical information have been developed by the NSO project, it will be possible to integrate the volunteering sector into national economic reporting in Mongolia. This would also directly contribute to enhanced visibility and credibility of Mongolian’s civil society and volunteering sector and provide a basis for future policy and law making.

4. Current regulatory and fiscal environment for volunteering

In the “Survey 2012”, responding organizations identified that amongst the list of laws provided with implications to volunteerism, social insurance and tax law, civil liability law, immigration law and labour law are most critical and have a negative effect on encouraging volunteering. One major concern expressed was regarding the difficulty and cumbersome process to obtain visas for foreign volunteers to work in Mongolia. Another key issue was around tax and social insurance for volunteers.

Volunteering, contributed based upon a culture of philanthropy, civil commitment and values, is critical to the effective functioning and stability of non-governmental organizations. A comprehensive supportive policy of the government would be highly conducive to the development of civil society.

Article 2.1 of Provision 4 of the **Law on Social Insurance** approved on 8th of May 2008 provides “citizens of Mongolia, citizens of foreign countries and individuals without a citizenship working with entities of all forms of ownership, non-governmental organizations, religious and other organizations under an employment agreement, or working under an agreement made with individuals according to Article 343 or 359 of Civil Code shall mandatorily be covered in the social insurance”. This amendment presents a major obstacle to non-governmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations possess limited and unstable financial resources and are not always even able to recruit employees under a long-term employment contract. In

most cases they limit themselves to short-term contracts or part-time employees. Nevertheless, NGOs have to now pay social insurance premiums equaling 11% of any payments and incentives given to individuals that have been employed. Even payment of lunch and public transport allowances to volunteers who have served without any agreement will entail 11% social insurance premiums. There are many non-governmental organizations that have paid fines for underpayment of social insurance premiums.

According to the Law on Taxation of Organizations and Entities that was in force before 2007 the NGOs were tax payers however its Article 7.1.7 stated “the income of registered public benefit non-governmental organizations is exempted from taxes” and Article 7.1.2 provided “the membership fees and donations paid by the members and supporters of non-governmental organizations are exempted from taxes”. The 1997 version of this law had originally exempted donations of legal entities to NGOs but this provision was abolished by the changes made to the law in 1999 by the State Great Hural.

The Law on Income Taxation of Entities approved in June 2006, and enacted in 2007, excluded NGOs from the list of tax payers but at same time abolished all tax deduction and exemption provisions pertaining to income of NGOs. Now only with a purpose of supporting NGOs initiated by disabled persons, donations up to MNT1,0 million given by entities and individuals are excluded from taxable income of the entity of the current year provided that such a donation is documented and proved, according to the amendment to the Law on Taxation of Entities (provision 19.10 of the Law on Taxation of Entities).

It is vital for the NGOs to have **the following issues** solved by the state:

- First of all it is necessary to improve the classification of NGOs to match the international standards. NGOs are categorized into associations, foundations, public benefit and membership organizations. This classification is interpreted and registered differently at the General Taxation Office, local taxation offices, National Registration Authority and the National Statistics Office² (Research “The current taxation framework for non-governmental organizations”, Democracy Education Centre 2012). Therefore, it is important to bring to order the registration of NGOs and ensure that all related institutions adhere to the same interpretation of the classification.
- It is also necessary to annul the provision added to Article 2.1 of provision 4 of the Law on Social Insurance in 2008 or exempt NGOs from it.
- In the Bill on Public Benefit Activities and in the Law on Income Taxation of Entities, it is necessary to provide tax deductions or exemptions to NGOs performing public benefit activities and to exclude from taxable income donations of legal entities to NGOs conducting public benefit activities.
- It is important to amend into the Law on Income Taxation of Individuals the provision which states “Taxpayers shall designate the total of the one percent of the personal tax income amount mentioned in Article 1 of Provision 8 in favour of a single NGO with public benefit activity”.
- It is important to allow NGOs to conduct economic activities besides their main functions. The income of such economic activities can then be spent for the purposes stated in the NGOs’ statutes. This income should be exempted from taxation, but in case it is spent beyond the purposes stated in the statutes, the income is to be taxed as any other entity.
- A Civil Society Development Fund should be established within the Law on Public Benefits Activities. It could be funded by a certain percentage of the mining income and purchase tenders as well as the unassigned 1% tax specified in the Law on Individual Income Taxation.

5. Past initiatives and lessons learnt

Previous Government initiatives to promote national volunteering include **Ministry of Health resolution A/1 31, passed in 1993**. This resolution recommended that each Family Group Practice (FGP) should involve **a range of community health volunteers** and clearly outlined functions to be delivered by them including such activities as providing support to elderly people and children, and providing information and guidance on how to manage reproductive health and family planning. However, it did not make reference to budget allocation to support volunteering activities. This resolution provided useful encouragement for the health sector to work with volunteers and projects are now successfully taking place in a range of locations including Dornod, Arvaykheer, and Chingeltei and Bayanzurkh districts of Ulaanbaatar. Many further FGPs have lists of volunteers, but they are not very active due to a lack of active management and funding.

Successful examples of the partnerships between NGOs, volunteers and government in promoting volunteering in recent years include:

- The Traffic Police Department, the World Health Organization and Service for Peace, a member of the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations, have worked together on **the “Stop” campaign since 2007**, mobilizing and training volunteers to work as traffic controllers in Ulaanbaatar city. Secondary schools have started letting high school students hold the “Stop” sign during peak hours of school commuting, which prevent students from traffic accidents. The Traffic Police Department mobilized volunteers to help people to cross the road safely. Through this campaign, people’s attitudes have changed. More people now cross the road only at signed road crossings and the behavior of drivers has improved. A total of 3,250 volunteers participated in the “Stop” campaign during the year 2007-2011.
- **The “Let’s Change Our City in Fun Way” project** implemented by Service for Peace first identified various ways to change the city for the better, by conducting “Intellectual research” together with the Mongolian Student’s Union. In collaboration with the Ulaanbaatar City Authority, the “Service Party Day” has been organized four times a year since 2008 in order to promote volunteering by students. More than 30,000 volunteers have participated over the years. Within the project, many sub-projects have been implemented including Plant Trees for Mongolia, Help through Everything That You Have, Let’s Protect the Tuul-River, Let’s Save our Selbe-River, Help Farmers, Peace Garden, Clean Mongolian Naadam Festival and many more.
- **The “Clean Mongolian Naadam Festival” volunteering activity** has been implemented by Service for Peace, in close collaboration with the Ulaanbaatar City Authority and the Traffic Police Department, in order to create a clean city and a happy celebration of Naadam for everyone, since 2007. Every year more than 500 volunteer students participate in improving the city environment by carrying out such activities as picking up trash and ensuring people use hand sanitizer. People’s mentality has changed towards keeping the environment clean while celebrating the festival together. Students are also happy to work as volunteers during Naadam holidays.

Efforts to reform existing legislations and policies in relation to non-governmental organizations have been ongoing for the last 10 years but without much progress. The Law on Mongolian NGOs was passed in 1997 and enabled the creation of an open and independent NGOs sector in line with the democratic principles laid down in the Mongolian Constitution. The 1997 Law on NGOs has been generally considered

as a positive step from the perspective of civil society development in Mongolia for this reason. However, vague provisions of the Law regarding management of NGOs are not sufficient to respond to the emerging needs of NGOs and growing civil society in Mongolia. Several attempts to amend the Law have taken place. In 2003 and also in 2009, a working group formed under the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs drafted new laws but NGOs were sceptical about the impacts of implementation of the drafted laws, and in the meantime, changes of the Government led to ending the work of finalizing the draft law until today.

Efforts to advocate for civil society development started in early 2000, led by active national civil society actors including the Democracy Education Center (DEMO). As a result, Mongolia's Civil Society Council was established in 2008, representing the common goals of over 100 NGOs, trade unions, civic and human rights movements and strengthening cooperation between the Government and civil society organizations and coordination of the activities of CSOs. The Civil Society Council signed the first ever Cooperation Agreement with the Government of Mongolia on 26 March 2008 according to Government resolution No.93. The priority areas for cooperation between the Government and the Civil Society Council included: provision of government contracts for services delivery by NGOs; improvement of legal and fiscal framework for NGOs; monitoring of the state budget by the Council and inclusion of Council members in government decision-making bodies. To update, Memoranda Of Understanding between the sectoral sub-Civic Councils and relevant Ministries were signed.

The major lesson learnt from these past initiatives is to engage key Government decision-makers and civil society actors together from the early stages of the policy and legislative development process, in order to ensure understanding, commitment and requisite support from both sides.

Case Study: Social Care Programme supported by volunteers of the Mongolian Red Cross



©Info Since 2004, the British Red Cross has supported a Mongolian Red Cross project that gives assistance to elderly and isolated people. The community-based project started to address the severe hardships faced by the urban poor living in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, including nomadic herder families who lost their animals during severe winter times. Many households were completely isolated during the winter months without access to proper housing, heating and household items. Backed by British Red Cross funding and training, volunteers visited beneficiaries at least twice a month to assist with household

and personal chores, bringing food and medicine, helping with medical visits, referrals and registration to claim state benefits, or simply being a friend. Close relationships between beneficiaries and volunteers have developed since the start of the project, which also runs social day care centers. **The social care programme is now reaching 1,275 vulnerable people and their families, supported by 425 volunteers.**

Case Study: Community Health Volunteers in Bayanzkhurk District, Ulaanbaatar



Oyuna is one of **170 community health volunteers involved in an EC funded project in Bayanzkhurk district health unit, supported by VSO**. One very important thing community health volunteers do is locating pregnant women in their community and ensuring they receive antenatal care from beginning to end of their pregnancy. Oyuna, a community health volunteer volunteering in Bayanzkhurk, devotes many hours every week to this task. Recently she met a young woman who is expecting her first child. This lady had recently migrated into Bayanzkhurk from the countryside and had not yet registered with Medical Services in Ulaanbaatar. She had had no antenatal examinations or screening since she became pregnant because she believed she was not entitled to it as an unregistered person. Oyuna knows better, she has been a volunteer in the Health Sector for

many years so has a lot of knowledge and experience on this. She was able to advise the young expectant mother that she should attend immediately for tests, checkups and advice, and that all medical examinations, even if she is not registered, are free during pregnancy.

The next day Oyuna happened to be volunteering as a Guide volunteer in the Polyclinic. She was happy to see the pregnant lady walk in asking for blood tests. Oyuna helped her find the Lab for these tests then got her an appointment for an antenatal checkup. Whilst she was waiting to see the doctor, Oyuna used the time to give her health promotion advice about healthy eating during pregnancy.

After the baby is born the family will see Oyuna again when she makes routine Post Natal visits to their home to monitor the progress of mother and child in those important first weeks of life.

It is expected that these simple interventions by volunteers will result in healthier babies being born to healthier mothers.

Case Study: Child Participation and Leading Committee (CPLC) project - Young Determined Volunteers in Nalaikh



In Nalaikh, 50km east of Ulaanbaatar, there are high school students willing to make a change for the better, voluntarily offering their own services to the community free of charge. They are united under **the Child Participation and Leading Committee (CPLC) project, initiated by World Vision Mongolia's Child Protection and Development Program**. It has been ten years since the project was launched and it has taken off in the community, bringing in a variety of positive impact. "The CPLC conducts various activities for the community and the children like health workshops to raise awareness on handwashing," says Ankhbayar

Khurelchuluun, project officer at Nalaikh Area Development. Ten years ago, Ankhbayar was one of the first members of the CLPC, himself. "It was a great experience that has helped me gain a lot of skills," he added.

Today there are over 30 high school students in the CLPC. They gather twice every week to discuss the upcoming workshops including health awareness on hepatitis, the harmful effects of alcohol and tobacco, basic understanding of economics for kids etc. "These children are so effective with their workshops that during the 2009 H1N1 swine flu outbreak, there was no case of infection in our district thanks to the CLPC's immediate help with raising awareness on precaution and helpful tips on the disease," says Ankhbayar.

The secret ingredient to building such a motivated team? The experience. "We do not give the CLPC anything of monetary value. These kids are working as volunteers trying to make their community better," says Ankhbayar. "The best deal for them is the learning experience from their workshops in exchange for joining the CLPC as a member." This matters a lot because it helps children discover and develop their own uncharted talents. "We learn so many things that are not taught in school," says junior Munkhbaatar Sambuu. "For example, through organizing our workshops, I learned to write the guideline, make a plan, implement it and reflect on the results. Best of all, I learned of leadership," he added.

6. What needs to be done to promote and strengthen volunteering

Mongolia has a long and rich tradition of informal volunteering, where individuals simply choose to volunteer to help others, based on their free and good will. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in volunteering and at the same time a shift towards more formal volunteering undertaken within an organizational framework. However, the general public showed a limited understanding about the importance and benefits of volunteering. This could be improved by increasing visibility and publicly recognizing the contribution made by volunteering activities in the community.

The “Survey 2012” revealed the major barriers to volunteering in Mongolia which includes the absence of a national volunteerism coordination mechanism or a responsible government entity. In addressing this issue, there was a suggestion to create a national volunteer center.

The need areas identified by the “Survey 2012” and research are summarized as follows:

- **Government leadership in creating a favorable volunteer infrastructure including:**
 - Creating or appointing a responsible government entity for volunteering;
 - Developing a national volunteerism policy and national volunteerism coordination mechanism and scheme;
 - Developing a favorable fiscal and regulatory environment for the volunteering sector and volunteers (such as provision of volunteer allowances and social insurance for volunteers and simplified visa issuance for recognized international volunteers);
 - Encouraging corporate volunteering in partnership with the private sector;
 - Establishing a national volunteer development center to organize trainings and other services related to volunteering;
 - Building a national volunteer portal website to provide information on volunteering and provide matching service between volunteers and volunteering opportunities.
- **Develop a national government policy on volunteering, expressed by the majority of respondents of the “Survey 2012” (94%), in order to:**
 - Clarify and determine specific goals of volunteering at the national level;
 - Create a common understanding about the benefits of volunteering;
 - Establish a clear instruction and strategy to develop a volunteering infrastructure;
 - Publicly announce government support for volunteering, recognize contribution made by volunteering and increase public awareness on volunteering;
 - Facilitate volunteering by diverse populations and at every level including community volunteering;
 - Manage volunteering activities more effectively including systematized monitoring and evaluation of volunteering activities;
 - Change government offices’ attitudes towards volunteering;
 - Strengthen networking amongst volunteers.
- **Increased public awareness raising on and promotion of volunteering by:**
 - Issuance of official certificates / awards of appreciation for volunteering activities;
 - Creating incentive mechanisms for volunteering by a wide range of the population including current employees of both private and public sectors and student volunteers provided with recognized school credits for volunteering activities;
 - Wide public dissemination of volunteering stories through various forms of media.

- **Systematized capacity building and trainings for volunteers and volunteering sector in the areas of:**
 - Management of volunteer assignments ranging between creating volunteer assignments, matching specific needs and skills, recruiting, providing trainings for requisite skills and monitoring and evaluating volunteer assignments;
 - Organization management of both volunteer sending and hosting organizations including clarification of procedures to involve volunteers;
 - Effective information sharing and communications and partnership building amongst volunteer involving organizations and volunteers.

CHAPTER III. Public Consultation at Citizens' Hall and Joint Recommendations

7. Public Consultation at Citizens' Hall on Volunteerism

The "Citizens' Hall Open Discussion on Volunteerism" took place at the Government House on 24 October 2012. It was hosted by the Office of the President and co-organized by the Ministry of Labor, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations (NMVO). For the first time, volunteerism became a public discussion agenda item, initiated by the Government of Mongolia. The discussion was attended by over 70 participants from government offices (including Ministry of Labor and National Statistical Office), Mongolian civil society and volunteering organizations and international development partners. Ms. Sosormaa Chuluunbaatar, Advisor to the President on Human Rights and Public Participation Policy, opened the meeting by introducing the background and rationale behind the formation of the Volunteerism Working Group and its work towards developing a full "Situation Analysis and Recommendations on Promoting Volunteerism in Mongolia". The Volunteerism Working Group represented by the Network of Mongolian Volunteer Organizations and the United Nations Volunteers presented the summary of findings from the "Survey on Volunteerism 2012" and desk-review on existing studies and reports on volunteerism in Mongolia and international framework on developing a volunteer infrastructure respectively. The Ministry of Labor presented its commitment to moving forward with the agenda of volunteerism for inclusive and sustainable social development and working towards taking appropriate measures to develop a favorable volunteer infrastructure in Mongolia in close collaboration with other ministries and government offices and civil society and volunteering organizations.

Summary of points made during Citizens' Hall Open Discussion on "What needs to be done next?"

- **Idea of formulating a new law on volunteering:** While the idea of creating a new law on volunteering is supported, civil society and volunteering organizations should not wait for a law to be formulated before taking actions to promote volunteering.
- **Capacity gap in volunteer assignment management by volunteering sector:** Many NGOs want to work with and involve volunteers, but lack capacity to manage volunteer assignments. Volunteering management requires a systematic approach and the necessary organizational and management structure to be in place.
- **Financing for volunteering:** Volunteering activities are value-driven, yet they do not come without expenses. Successful and professional management of volunteering activities depends on sustainable and well managed funding as with any other work. Volunteers require allowances to cover basic costs involved in delivery of given assignments. A volunteering support fund should be established, the mechanism of which could be incorporated into the current revision process of the 1997 Law on NGOs in Mongolia.
- **High demand for volunteering in social welfare sector:** There is high demand for volunteering in the social welfare sector expressed by the public.
- **Volunteering by school children and parents in tandem:** To encourage volunteering activities by school children, there is a need to work with parents to help them to better understand about volunteering and its benefits to personal and skills development and thereby enable them to encourage their children towards volunteering.

- **Volunteering by the disabled:** It is important to think about what volunteering activities could be done by the disabled people, not only to think of them as beneficiaries of volunteering services.
- **Informal volunteering:** Informal volunteering is rooted in Mongolian traditional way of life and it should be encouraged alongside more formal volunteering.
- **Sustainability of development programmes and projects funded by international partners:** There is a concern about sustainability of the Community Health Volunteer Project supported by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) as it comes to a closure. Without government leadership in providing support to the volunteering sector with requisite measures for continuity, the good work carried out through volunteering initiated by the project risks fading away. The Ministry of Labor mentioned about a small fund available to support the activities.
- **Encourage volunteering by public servants as an example:** Many ministries and government offices in United Kingdom grant their civil servants three days off per year to encourage volunteering activities. This idea could be introduced to the Government of Mongolia to provide incentives for public servants to volunteer.
- **Research, study and database on volunteerism:** A comprehensive and well organized study on volunteering needs to be carried out in order to assess the current status of volunteering with its opportunities and challenges, support evidence based policy making process and help promote volunteering.
- **Presidential decree on promoting volunteerism:** Issuance of a Presidential decree on promoting volunteering would enable volunteerism to be placed on the government agenda and to ensure government leadership and ownership in taking actions to develop a favorable volunteer infrastructure and promoting volunteerism for inclusive and sustainable human development.

8. Joint recommendations on developing a volunteer infrastructure and promoting volunteerism in Mongolia

These “Joint Recommendations” were developed by the Volunteerism Working Group based on the key findings of the situation analysis on volunteerism in Mongolia by conducting the “Survey on Volunteerism 2012” and desk-review, research and studies both on volunteerism in Mongolia and international frameworks and experiences on developing a volunteer infrastructure and the outcomes of the “Citizens’ Hall Open Discussion on Volunteerism”. The purpose of these “Joint Recommendations” is to determine and clarify the prioritized need areas in promoting volunteering and developing a volunteer infrastructure in Mongolia as guidance on steps to be taken by the Government and civil society and volunteering sector.

For the President and the Office of the President of Mongolia:

- **Issue a Presidential decree on promoting volunteerism in Mongolia directed to the State Great Khural (National Parliament), the Government and the general public.** The decree could call for developing such measures of promoting volunteering as **officially designating the International Volunteer Day (IVD) on 5 December be celebrated at the national and local levels** in order to provide a chance for volunteer-involving organizations and individual volunteers to promote their contributions to development in close collaboration with government agencies, non-profit organizations, community groups and the private sector. Using the opportunity of the celebration

of IVD, public recognition awards of best volunteers of the year could be awarded by the President. Other measures to promote and encourage **volunteering by diverse populations** could start by providing public support for one day a year of volunteering by public servants, employees of private sectors and civil society and non-governmental organizations and marginalized social groups such as elderly, youth, women, children, disabled etc.

- **Incorporate the issue of promoting volunteering into the currently drafted Public Benefits Activities Law** by the Office of the President, which could include articles related to provision of state support for developing a national volunteering infrastructure, definition of volunteering, and arrangements for formal volunteering and clarification of contractual terms between volunteers, volunteer sending and hosting organizations amongst others.

For the State Great Khural (National Parliament) and the Government:

Request Government leadership in developing an enabling environment for volunteering activities by citizens. Necessary measures include:

- **Establish a national volunteerism policy/state concept paper.** This could formulate a favorable legal framework, sustainable public financing and a national volunteering development strategy. **This should be integrated into the National Development Plan**, to be implemented at the national and local levels and to be subject to systematic monitoring and evaluation of volunteering activities and volunteering sector.
- Allocate requisite and sustainable funding to support **volunteering in the annual Government budget**;
- **Institutionalize a national volunteerism coordination mechanism at the national and local levels** by taking such measures as:
 - Establishing volunteer development center(s);
 - Appointing or creating a responsible entity involving the representatives of civil society and volunteering organizations;
 - Develop a nationwide integrated system of surveys, researches, studies, database and statistical information on volunteering;
 - Establishing a system to monitor and evaluate the volunteering sector and activities, documenting best practices of volunteering;
 - Organizing capacity building and training programmes for civil society and volunteering organizations to promote volunteerism;
 - Improving public perception and knowledge about volunteerism and its contribution;
 - Integrating volunteerism into school curricula and providing incentives for volunteering by secondary and tertiary education system linked with school credits;
 - Strengthening information dissemination and providing matching services between volunteers and volunteering opportunities using national volunteerism website (this could be done through government contracting with the volunteering sector);
- **Amend and improve the existing laws by incorporating provisions related to “volunteerism”, “volunteers”, “volunteering activities”, and “civil society and volunteer involving organizations”:** The list of laws with implications with volunteerism include the 1997 Laws on NGOs, the draft

Public Benefits Activities Law, the Public Service Law and possible amendment by the Ministry of Labor of Employment/Labor Law to integrate provisions related to volunteering activities.

- **Establish practical measures to encourage volunteering activities in as diverse sectors as possible,** including environment, education, health, social welfare, prevention of crime, natural disaster preparedness, democratic governance and human rights, and also **by a diverse populations** including employees of both public and private sectors and civil society and non-governmental organizations and marginalized segments of the population such as the elderly and retired (with the effect of transferring a wealth of experiences and knowledge from one generation to another), youth (e.g. volunteering activities linked with school credits and also recognition by future employers), women, children, disabled people etc.

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- Volunteer infrastructure frameworks in Europe (Slovakia, Czech Republic, Denmark etc.), Gambia and Thailand
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