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Editor's note

Dear volunteers,

When you imagine glacier-capped peaks, sweeping plains, coniferous forests, giant fresh water lakes and a great desert, what country comes to mind? Yes, why not Mongolia? I am sincerely glad that you are deciding to come to Mongolia. You can discover precious life in Mongolia. One thing I should remind you is that unexpected things always happen in Mongolia. You can have an amazing adventure here. Not only is life unpredictable but the climate is also unpredictable too. For instance, it has just sleet a beautiful snow in summer on May 6th. I see snow topped mountains in front of my office window which is indescribably marvellous.

You would discover an incredible life here and at the same time everything is going to be safe, because all of the Projects Abroad staff are always willing to help you and supply all of the necessary things for you.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who decided to discover a new life in Mongolia.

Sincerely,

Zulaa

Social Manager

Projects Abroad Mongolia

Donation

Medical Volunteer of Projects Abroad Mongolia, Shawn Steckle Daniel, donated an amount of money to the Orphanage centres which is indescribably marvellous and Projects Abroad staff and care project volunteers decided to use this donation to repair certain orphanages as well as buying exercise equipment. We wish such people in the world increase more and more in the future.



Social event

WALK ACTIVITY

We organized a walking activity on May 7th. Volunteers of Projects Abroad and Mongolian students who are journalism club members participated in this activity. Participants walked from Sukhbaatar Square to National Park and organized games at the park. This activity is mostly focused on not only culture exchanges but also the practice of English speaking for Mongolian students which is very important for them. Those journalism club members also expressed their gratitude to Anna who was previously a supervisor as you can see from the picture.



Project Update

VOICES OF THE WORLD PROJECT

Voices of the World is an online global initiative developed by Projects Abroad, the leading global organizer of overseas volunteer work placements. Through the website, young aspiring journalists from Mongolia or Romania, South Africa, England, France or Senegal (to name only a very few) will have the opportunity to meet and exchange views with one another and, in this way, come to understand the world and better express their views on it and do so with more empathy.

In Mongolia we created a free-of-charge Journalism Club in Humanity University for the journalism class who contribute to Voices of the World, under the



supervision of members of staff member Zulaa and volunteers Abigail and Elizabeth. Journalism club meets every Thursday. In our meetings Abigail and Elizabeth lecture them on how to write good articles and how to take the best photos. Generally Mongolian students are really interested not only in journalism classes but also in improving their English with the volunteers.

Destination of the Month

DOWNTOWN ATTRACTIONS

Sukhbaatar square

In the heart of Ulaanbaatar lies a wide square named after Sukhbaatar, a famous patriot and independence hero. A mounted statue of Sukhbaatar stands at the centre of the square, looking toward a more imposing, although less dynamic, effigy of Chinggis Khan, which sits in an alcove of the Parliament House that marks the



square's northern boundary. Many landmarks surround the square, including Mongolia's Stock Exchange, the Opera and Ballet House, the Central Post Office and the Cultural Palace.

The National History Museum of Mongolia

A museum that boasts a sizeable collection of objects and information from human beings' first appearance in Mongolia to the present, the National History Museum gives visitors an opportunity to see what has changed and what has stayed the same in Mongolia. Its exhibits display how Mongolians lived, fought, worshipped and entertained themselves throughout their history.



The Natural History Museum

If you like dinosaurs, you will want to visit The National History Museum. A remarkably intact Tarbosaurus skeleton (a close cousin of

Tyrannosaurus Rex) awaits visitors in the paleontological section, as do fossilized eggs and the bones of several other specimens.

Taxidermists have also preserved a number of Mongolian animals and birds, as well as creatures for outside Mongolian



and even outside Asia, but some of these displays are in sorry need of upkeep. The museum is a 3 minute walk to the northwest of Sukhbaatar Square.

Miscellaneous

LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT

Mongolian, the country's official language, is spoken and understood throughout the country. Russian is another commonly used language, spoken principally by older generations; however other foreign languages, especially English, are becoming more popular.

Although unified by language, Mongolia's 20 plus ethnic groups have each developed their own local dialects. The dialect spoken by the Halha, Mongolia's largest ethnic group, is the most widely known. The eastern Mongolian dialects include those spoken by ethnic groups who previously inhabited Inner Mongolia and now live in Dornod Province, on the far eastern steppe. Northern dialects are spoken by the Buriyat people, who currently live in northern Mongolia and the Buriyat Republic in southern Siberia, Russia. Western dialects include those spoken by the ethnic groups belonging to the Oirat, who generally inhabit Altai Mountain range.

Today Mongolian is written in Cyrillic, but the nation's traditional Mongolian script, written in columns and derived from the Uighur alphabet, is gradually reappearing, mainly on signs and logos, and now in some classrooms. In 1941 the classical script was replaced by the new alphabet based on Russian Cyrillic characters, and introduced as the country's official system of writing. There is no major difference between the spelling and the pronunciation of this script whether used in Russian or Mongolian. The Modern Mongolian alphabet consists of 35 characters. Below are each of the characters and a basic language guide, including greetings, directions and numbers.

Cyrillic alphabet for Mongolian (Khalkha)

А а	Б б	В в	Г г	Д д	Е е	Ё ё	Ж ж	З з	И и	Й й	К к
а	бэ	вэ	гэ	дэ	е	ё	жэ	зэ	и	хагас и	ка
a	b	w	g	d	ye/yö	yo	j	j (dz)	i	i	k
[ɑ]	[b/p]	[β/φ]	[g/k]	[d/t]	[je/jə]	[jo]	[dʒ/ʃ]	[dz/ʦ]	[i]	[i]	[k]
Л л	М м	Н н	О о	Ө ө	П п	Р р	С с	Т т	У у	Ү ү	Ф ф
эл	эм	эн	о	ө	пэ	эр	эс	тэ	у	ү	эф
l	m	n-, -ng	o	ö	p	r	s	t	u	ü	f
[l]	[m]	[n/ŋ]	[ɔ]	[ø]	[p]	[r/q/ʁ/χ]	[s]	[tʰ]	[ʊ]	[ʉ]	[f]
Х х	Ц ц	Ч ч	Ш ш	Щ щ	Ъ ъ	Ы ы	Ь ь	Э э	Ю ю	Я я	
ха	цэ	чэ	ша	шча	хатуугийн	ы	зөөлний	э	ю	я	
kh	c	č	š	šč	тэмдэг	ii	тэмдэг	e	yu/yü	ya	
[x/χ]	[c]	[tʃ]	[ʃ]	[ʃʃ]	hard sign	[i:]	soft sign	[ɛ]	[ju]	[ja]	

Greetings

Goodbye	Bayartai	Баяртай
Thank you	Bayarlalaa	Баярлалаа
Sorry	Uuchlaarai	Уучлаарай
What is your name?	Tanii ner hen be?	Таны нэр хэн бэ?
I don't understand	Bi oilgohgui baina	Би ойлгохгүй байна
I do understand	Bi oilgoj baina	Би ойлгож байна
I am hungry	Bi ulsuj baina	Би улсуж байна
I am lost	Bi tuurchihluu	Би түрчихлүү

Directions

North	Khoid	Хойд
South	Umnud	Умнуд
East	Zuun	Зүүн
West	Baruun	Баруун
In front of	Umnu	Умну
Behind	Khoino	Хойно
Left turn	Zuun	Зүүн
Right turn	Baruun	Баруун
Straight	Chigeeree	Чигээрээ

Numbers

1	Neg	Нэг
2	Hoyor	Хоёр
3	Gurav	Гурав
4	Duruv	Дөрөв
5	Tav	Тав
6	Zurgaa	Зургаа
7	Doloo	Долоо
8	Naim	Найм
9	Yus	Ес
10	Arav	Арав

Host article

My name is Altansukh. My family consists of three members and we like very much to have volunteers in our home because we can learn from each other and are also happy to see them helping the Mongolian people in their area. At the moment I am the host of Shawn who arrived on May 2nd from Canada. The first time I saw him I said to myself that he is as tall as a basketball player. He is a medical volunteer so he has seen a lot of surgeries then he will tell us about the surgery; how it goes and how fantastic it was. When I heard this I thought he had a wonderful time experiencing these surgeries. He said I will never have this opportunity to see these kinds of surgeries in my country. Because it's different to western surgery, like some of the surgeries that were used in Canada a long time ago. As a host I want to mention one thing and that is to 'Be Clean' because some volunteers just throw their clothes on the floor. Mongolian people do not like that. So having a good appearance and discipline will make volunteers happier and feel good, I promise you that! I hope all the volunteers have a great time in their destination.

Volunteer Corner

Written by Annette

PLACEMENT

Today was my first day at the orphanage. The older children looked at me with their eyes wide open, in total silence. I said hello to them, but no one dared say anything at first. Then, finally, one of them said, almost whispering, "Sain baina uu".

My job is to help out a little with the small children in the morning and then teach English to older children. I took a beautiful little autistic girl out for a walk - she loves being outdoors - and we met a puppy, for mutual joy! Somehow the puppy seemed to understand that it mustn't come too close, but it yelped and jumped and hid and ran around, and the girl bubbled with



laughter. At lunch I had the task of feeding a very small boy who ate his soup with great appetite, but just before the last spoonful he fell asleep, his head falling down onto the plate.

After having lunch I started teaching English! It just struck me yesterday that maybe the children wouldn't know the Latin alphabet properly, and right I was. They could say the letters in the order of the alphabet, but when I asked them at random, pointing at letters on a poster, most of them just guessed, I noticed. There is always a brilliant pupil, though, and the little girl that stood out here knew all the letters and everything else too. She was in the morning group, but asked if she could come in the afternoon as well and do the same things all over again ... Here we are practicing the pronunciation of "cat", as you can see from my exaggerated articulation.

Most Mongolian school girls wear the kind of white hair bows you can see Enkhtuul wearing in the picture - very pretty! The children also dress up to go to school, the boys wearing impeccably ironed white shirts.



On the way home today I took the trolley bus. On every bus there is a ticket seller, usually a woman, who isn't always that easy to spot, especially if the bus is crowded, since (s)he is moving around in the bus and isn't wearing a uniform. The most recognizable item is often a rather big cross-body bag. The thing is that I'm also using a rather big cross-body bag, so today there was a lady who handed me 1000 tugrig and wanted a ticket from me :-). The price for a trolley bus ticket is, by the way, 200 tugrig, about 12 cents. I have taken the bus (and trolley bus) quite a lot recently and I must say that the tickets look so much nicer than the ones we have in Brussels. Here is an example - I'm sorry it's a little crinkly but it has spent a few days in my pocket. It's a small item, 6 x 4 cm, approximately.

Country life

How can I summarize three days filled to the brim with all sorts of impressions and experiences in just a few lines? I have seen newborn lambs; I have seen a newborn lamb die; I have held a one-hour old baby goat in my arms; I have seen a stillborn baby goat (yes, I do know that baby goats are called kids); I have seen a sheep being slaughtered; I have seen newborn lambs and baby goats being brought into the ger and put next to the stove to gather strength; I have met incredibly hospitable and friendly people; I have drunk countless cups of milk tea; I have eaten fresh home-

made yoghurt (has absolutely nothing to do with the product we get from supermarkets); I have tried milking a cow (disastrous result); and I have seen the endless steppe which I just can't get enough of.

Shaman

The shaman I visited the other day is a pretty lady with a husband and children, living in an ordinary apartment. Seeing her transform into a shaman was an extraordinary experience, which started with the intense shaman drum beats and her chanting, all this while the television was on in the living room. The first spirit she channelled, she channels two, was a very determined gentleman with a liking for snuff. Her voice changed, as did her language, which became a somewhat archaic form of Mongolian. After a break of an hour or so, she channelled her second spirit and turned into a medicine shaman. This gentleman seemed to be a little softer and didn't want any snuff.

The room where the ceremonies took place had a part of it set up with the necessary equipment. It is to be noted that the two spirits use different outfits and also different drums.

It was somewhat unreal witnessing these ancient rituals - with the television commercials and music shows as a faint acoustic backdrop.

News

FIRST INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

From February 21 until March 1, the First International Competition of Pianists 'Chopin & 21st Century of Mongolia' was held in Mongolia.

This event was to celebrate the 200th anniversary of world famous Polish composer, virtuoso pianist maestro, Frederick Chopin. 'The Chopin & Mongolia of the 21st Century' 1st International Competition of Pianists was initiated by 'Urbanek Mongolia' and supported and co-organized by the Ministry of Education Culture & Science, Embassy of Poland, State Academic Theatre of Opera & Ballet, University of Arts & Culture, Tuguldur foundation, Arts Council of Mongolia and Music Platform.

There were 40 talented musicians from France, Italy, Mongolia, North Korea, Russia, and South Korea who participated in this truly International event.

The General jury included a distinguished guest from Poland, well-known pianist, Mr. Karol Radjivonovich.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to 17 successful participants, Diplomas to 8 semi finalists, and 1 prize to the Best Teacher, and to 4 prize winners, the 'Talented Pianist of the Future Award', which was a grant to study at the Polish Music Academy named after Chopin!