



Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled - 2 (FIELD 2)

Final Report

July 2011 – June 2013



**Cooperative Agreement
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USAID

Submitted By:
Mercy Corps Mongolia

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ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organization
CBSWS	Community Based Social Welfare Services
CRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DLACG	Department of Land Affairs, Construction and Geodesy
DPO	Disabled People's Organization
FIELD 2	Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled - 2
GEC	General Election Committee
ILC	Independent Living Center (Universal Progress)
MC	Mercy Corps
MCTP	Ministry of Construction and Town Planning (2012-present)
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
MNAWU	Mongolian National Association of Wheelchair Users
MoRTCTP	Ministry of Roads, Transportation, Construction and Town Planning (2008-2012)
MoPDSW	Ministry of Population Development and Social Welfare
MoPDSP	Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection
PDLSP	Provincial Department of Labor and Social Welfare
PWDs	People with Disabilities
ToT	Training of Trainers
UB	Ulaanbaatar

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project name:	Fostering an Inclusive Environment for Local Disabled – 2
Duration:	July 2011 - June 2013
Funding:	Total funding: USD 356,783 USAID : USD 356,783
Project clients:	People with disabilities and disabled people's organizations
Reporting period:	July 2011 – June 2013
Target area:	Arhangai, Uvurhangai, Dundgobi, Uvs, Bayanhongor provinces and Bayangol district of Ulaanbaatar (UB) City



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the people with disabilities of Mongolia, Mercy Corps would like to express deep gratitude to USAID for its funding of FIELD 2 project. The FIELD 2 project was launched in July 2011 and closed on 30 June 2013. The project targeted five aimags—Arhangai, Dundgobi, Uvurhangai, Uvs and Bayanhongor—and the Bayangol district in Ulaanbaatar. The project aimed to enhance the rights of people with disabilities (PWDs) to facilitate independent living and full participation in all aspects of life through three objectives:

- Promote the implementation of two national 2010 Accessible Construction and Walkways Standards;
- Improve the livelihood opportunities, capacities and life skills of PWDs through the provision of quality Community Based Social Welfare Services (CBSWS) in collaboration with Provincial Department of Labor and Social Welfare (PDLWS); and
- Increase the number of PWDs who exercise their right to vote (added in April 2012).

For the first objective, Mercy Corps and our Disabled People's Organization (DPO) partners worked with a range of stakeholders to implement the national accessibility standards (MNS:6055-2009 "Building space for people with disabilities in the civic construction" and MNS:6056-2009 "Budgeting walkway for pedestrians and people with disabilities"). FIELD 2 created nine Working Groups with representatives from civil society, DPOs, and government agencies. Through these partnerships, local activists worked to make 82 high-use buildings and 88 crossing cuts meet the accessibility standards. Additionally, FIELD 2 trainings and awareness-raising campaigns reached approximately 14,000 citizens, educating them about accessibility challenges and the status of persons with disabilities.

In two years, FIELD 2 partners directly aided 5,694 people with disabilities (PWDs) to improve their quality of life. Mercy Corps issued subgrants to local DPOs to improve their organizational capacity and work to see PWDs improve their livelihood opportunities. The subgrants led to 134 people with disabilities starting their own business. In June 2013, 100 percent of PWDs surveyed at the end of the project reported improved self-esteem, 82 percent saying that they have *significantly* improved self-esteem following their participation in FIELD 2 activities and events.

By mutual agreement, USAID and Mercy Corps added a third goal to FIELD 2 in late April 2012, namely to increase the number of PWDs who participate in the election process for the June national elections. Although none of the DPO partners had any electoral experience, they quickly mobilized and advocated for changes to the electoral code to ensure that polling stations were accessible. The rate of PWD participation in the election process doubled in 2012.

FIELD 2 more than doubled the results of several project targets, but others that required local line ministry financing fell short. Where targets were exceeded, FIELD 2 credits the strong cooperation between government organizations and partner DPOs. After the 2012 elections, this base became powerful a tool to advocate to the newly elected government. At the same time, the changes in local officials after those elections also impeded achieving other targets.

Mercy Corps and our DPO partners learned a number of lessons, which are highlighted at the end of this report. Briefly, we found that psycho-social efforts make relatively rapid improvements, political-economic objectives take longer, consistent government policy implementation and infrastructure changes take the longest amount of time.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Objective #1. Promote implementation of the 2010 accessible construction and walkways standards

Activity 1.1 *Task Force assists in forming the Working Groups, consisting of key government agencies and professional associations, in one district of Ulaanbaatar and Aimags to promote accessible construction and walkways standards.*

Mercy Corps initially planned to establish six Working Groups in Mongolia to enforce the implementation of accessibility standards in the project target areas. In the end, nine were created due to a strong interest at the Municipal (UB) and National levels to create unique Working Groups to address higher level challenges. These Working Groups were comprised of representatives from DPOs and government agencies, and helped raise awareness of accessibility standards and advocated for their consistent implementation. By working together, both government organizations and DPOs were able to have a far greater impact on local communities than if they had acted alone, or worse, against each other.

According to the project baseline in 2011, only four of 23 interviewed government officials were aware of the 2010 accessibility standards. The first Working Groups were formed in Arhangai, Uvurhangai, Dundgobi, Bayanhongor, Uvs aimags and the Bayangol district of Ulaanbaatar city. These six Working Groups consisted of 35 representatives of six government agencies in the project target areas and 12 DPO members. All Working Groups developed work plans to enforce the accessibility standards' implementation. Initial activities included organizing Barrier Free Day events in their aimags and public awareness campaigns. Though DPOs took the lead in Dundgobi, Uvurhangai and Arhangai aimags where the FIELD 1 project was implemented, Mercy Corps staff led the planning of the Barrier Free Day activities in aimags new to FIELD activities, including Bayanhongor and Uvs.

Mongolian Accessibility Standards

MNS:6055-2009—Building space for PWDs in the civic construction

MNS:6056-2009—Budgeting walkway for pedestrians and people with disabilities

As the FIELD 2 project continued, DPOs and government officials established three additional Working Groups at the national and municipal (UB) levels. The first Working Group was established in late 2011 in the UB Municipal Office to reflect accessibility standards to all newly-built pedestrian walkways and buildings in UB. (In July 2013, UB Mayor Bat-Uul issued a decree that departments in all nine UB districts are to be held accountable to meeting the national accessibility standards, potentially affecting 50% of the nation's population.) The national level Working Group was established in 2012 as a Policy Reform Committee of Ministry of Construction and Town Planning. The third Working Group was established in 2013 in the Government House to make that building accessible for people with disabilities.

Through FIELD 2, the Mongolian National Association of Wheelchair Users (MNAWU) and Aivuun DPO developed close ties with government organizations, starting with their common goal to build an accessible environment in Mongolia. The MNAWU became part of all three higher level Working Groups and secured approval of an order from the Minister of Construction and Town Planning in 2013 to require all construction companies to enforce accessibility standards. As a result of the

Working Group’s efforts, the Government House now has a ramp in the main entrance and accessible toilets on the first floor. The next goal of the Working Group is to build an accessible lift in the Government House.

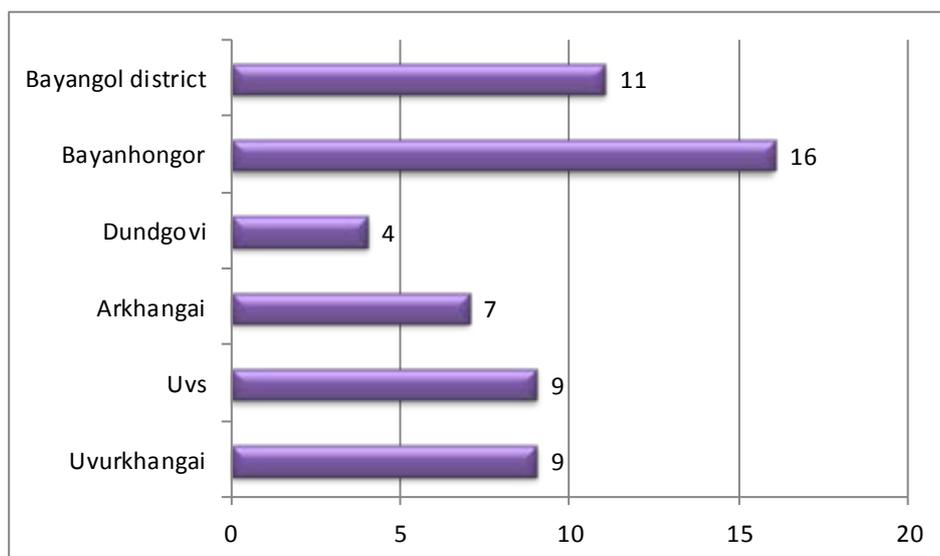


Newly built ramp and accessible toilets in the Government House of Mongolia

The mix of stakeholders represented in the nine Working Groups, promoted a greater sense of responsibility and action about more than just implementation of the national standards. Community inclusion, government services, and action all became part of the discussion. It is this broad foundation that will promote the sustainability of the work undertaken by FIELD 2 staff and partners.

The other task of the Working Groups was to ensure that government organizations released publicly available decisions and recommendations to implement accessibility standards through media, meetings, community targeted activities and formal government channels. These official and unofficial decisions and recommendations came in the form of orders of Aimag Governors, orders from the Professional Inspection Agency’s construction inspector, or private businessperson’s initiative to build a ramp in his or her own facilities. Indicator 1.1.2 in the FIELD 2 project Performance Monitoring Plan (Annex 2), aimed for 50 decisions and recommendations; the project achieved 56 decisions. (Graph 1, Publicly available decisions and recommendations)

Graph 1: Publicly available decisions and recommendations



In addition, the FIELD 2 project team and Working Groups focused on enforcing accessibility standards from the initial stage of blueprint approval for construction and aimed for at least 10 percent to reflect these standards (Annex 2, FIELD 2 Performance Monitoring Plan). According to the Ministry of Construction and Town Planning during the national conference “Implementing Policy Reforms to Target the Social Welfare System” in November 2012, 73.3 percent of planned buildings for 2013 reflected accessibility standards, compared to eight percent at the 2011 baseline. After the 2012 elections, the FIELD 2 project team saw a positive increase in implementing accessibility standards and the review and approval of blueprints. Mr. Bayarbat, a FIELD 1 advocate, was promoted to Head of Coordination Department for Policy Implementation of Town Planning and Land Affairs in the Ministry of Construction and Town Planning in 2012. Under his direction, all blueprints of planned construction had to reflect those standards; if they did not, he ordered a re-design. His direct contribution increased FIELD 2’s actual impact dramatically.

Indicator 1.1.3: % increase of new building blueprints that came to consideration for state approval

Target—10%
Actual—73.3%

Activity 1.2 Conduct training and awareness events for policy-makers and inspection, planning and finance department officials and engineers on accessibility standards



ToT graduates in November 2011

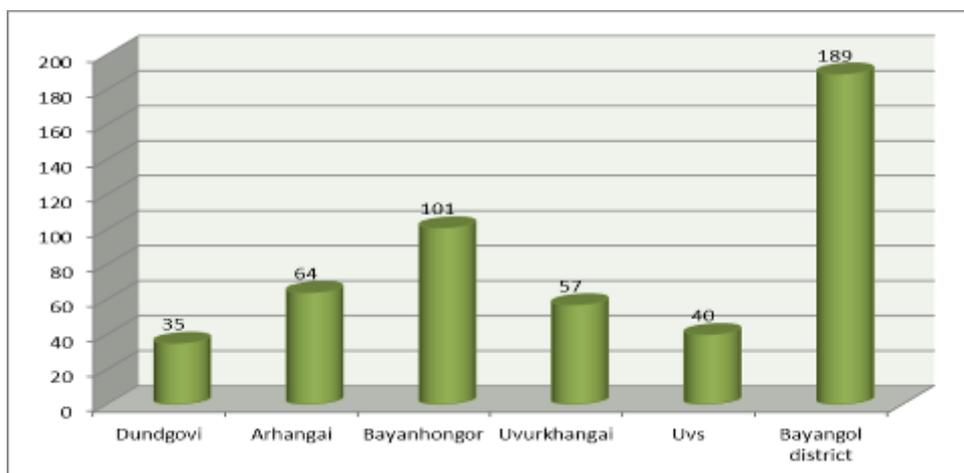
In November 2011, FIELD 2 conducted a training of trainers (ToT) on the accessibility standards, universal design principles, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the Social Model of Disability for 35 DPO representatives from the project’s five aimags and the Bayangol district in Ulaanbaatar. The ToT took place in close cooperation with the Ministry of Road, Transportation, Construction and Tourism and the original drafters of the accessibility standards. Participants included government officials, engineers and designers, businesses, DPOs and CSO

members across the FIELD 2 project target area. Government representatives from the State Professional Inspection Agency, the Municipal Professional Inspection Agency, Aimag Professional Inspection Agency, Municipal Department of Auto Roads, Municipal Office for Construction Budgeting and Permission, State Department of Land Affairs, Construction and Geodesy, and the Association of Architects were joined by DPO representatives from the aimags and Ulaanbaatar.

Once certified, these Accessibility Trainers received a hard and soft copy of the national accessibility standards as well as additional training materials, with the expectation that they would extend the information to colleagues in their respective institutions. Participants also developed action plans to build inclusive environments in their regions.

The Accessibility Trainers had a combined goal to reach 300 people in two-day trainings after their return to their aimags. By project end, the Accessibility Trainers exceeded that goal by 38 percent, training 486 local government officials, CSO representatives, businesspeople and journalists, improving the detailed awareness of the national standards essential to planning and implementing upcoming construction projects. This broader base of knowledgeable community residents helped support the Working Groups’ implementation of accessibility standards and motivated government officials to issue official notices about the accessibility standard. The impact of these trainings, and the actions the community demanded, are seen in the greater number of buildings that meet accessibility standard (IR1.2) and the number of PWDs who say they have better accessibility now than before FIELD 2 (IR1.3) (Graph 2, Number of accessibility standards trainings).

Graph 2: Number of accessibility standards trainings



Activity 1.3 *Conduct accessibility assessments of the roads in one district of Ulaanbaatar and one aimag and make recommendations for policy-makers and planners on modifications*

From January-September 2012, the FIELD 2 DPO partner, Mongolian National Association for Wheelchair Users (MNAWU), conducted a Walkway Accessibility Assessment which was used to engage local Ulaanbaatar officials in a review of existing conditions. In the FIELD 2 project baseline in 2011, 94 percent of 75 crossing cuts in six target areas were reported inaccessible. To address these concerns, the FIELD 2 project contributed USD 3900 or MNT 6.7 million to the MNAWU to conduct a five-month assessment of the current accessibility status of walkways in Ulaanbaatar and Uvurhangai aimag, to disseminate the findings, and to increase the understanding of and support for improving walkway accessibility.



Members of MNAWU during the Walkway Accessibility Assessment in UB spring 2012

The Association trained its members to evaluate walkways according to the accessibility standard and how to properly use the assessment equipment bought using project funds. Mr. Mandal, leader of the Association for Pedestrians and Bike Riders, trained 15 members of MNAWU, including seven women and eight men, using technical and practical methods.

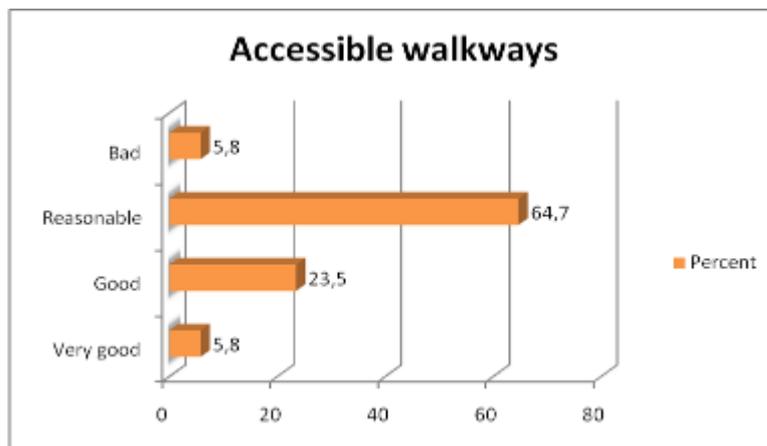
After the training, the members of the MNAWU conducted a general assessment of 33 traffic roads – a total of 51.5 km. Of the 33 roads, five did not have pedestrian walkways running alongside them. From the roads that did have walkways, the MNAWU selected 18 walkways to assess by 19 categories as stated in the accessible walkway standard.

An equal number of the assessed walkways met the “bad” and “very good” ratings—5.8 percent. About 23.5 percent met the “good” level, while 64.7 percent were classified as “reasonable.” (Graph 3, Accessible walkways)



Walkway assessment tool training to MNAWU members

Graph 3: Accessible Walkways



Based on the findings of the Walkway Accessibility Assessment, the MNAWU developed the following recommendations to the Auto Road Department:

1. Reconsider walkway accessibility standards to reflect the harsh Mongolian climate.
2. Train road construction workers to build walkways that meet the standards. Provide them with professional handouts on accessible standards, material contents and clear instructions.
3. Leave green space along the walkway when developing a building's blueprints.
4. Introduce penalties for constructors who destroy walkways and leave without rehabilitation.
5. Identify a specific government structure/body that is responsible for walkway maintenance. Currently, both the Department of Auto Roads and the Department of Town Planning are assigned walkway maintenance, leading to no clear accountability for issues related to walkways.
6. Follow the characteristics of the accessibility standards such as construction materials, width of walkway, and base of the walkway when designing and approving the blueprints.

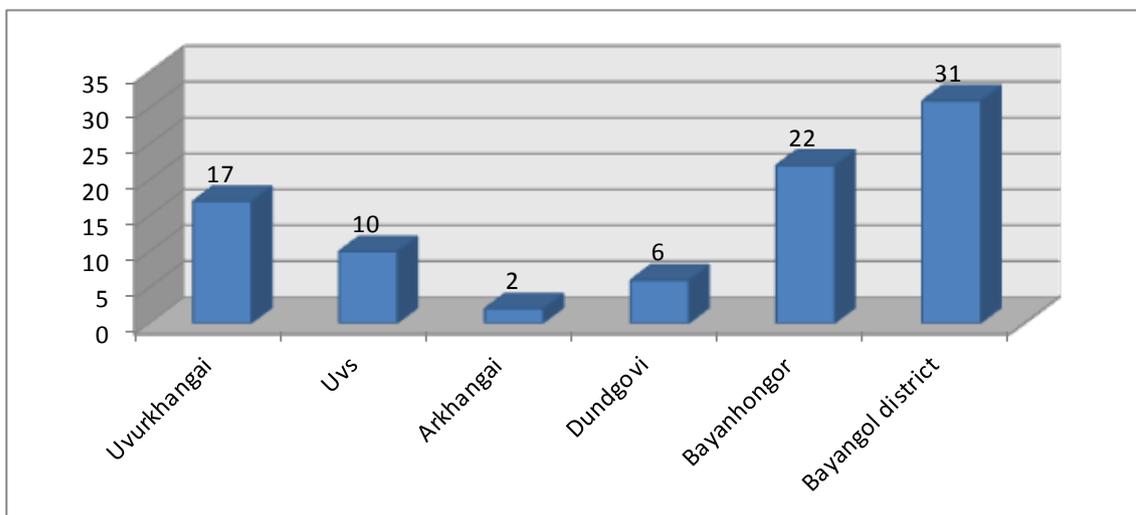
The assessment helped the MNAWU establish scientifically the lack of accessibility in the capital city of Mongolia in a way that had not been done previously. The Ministry of Road and Transportation also received this assessment and has had discussions with the MNAWU to reflect the standards in walkway construction work undertaken in 2013. In addition, under the subgranted Accessibility Project, the DPO, Aivuun, worked with the governor of Bayangol district in Ulaanbaatar to advocate for better accessibility in Bayangol district. The first results of those advocacy efforts have started to appear; for example, a brand new crossing walkway in Bayangol district has been built and fully reflects the accessibility standards (details on pages 17-18 of this report).

Through the Working Groups, DPOs advocated for greater respect for the accessibility standards by organizing round table discussions, broadcasting TV programs, conducting training sessions, and distributing information leaflets. FIELD 2 initially aimed to improve accessibility for 30 walkway crossing cuts, and ultimately achieved 88—almost triple the original target. This result may have been because crossing cuts are easy to do and less expensive than ramps up to buildings, and also because of the continued activity of MNAWU and the municipal office Working Group to enforce accessibility standards nationwide. (Graph 4, Accessible crossing cuts in FIELD 2 project area)



New crossing cut in Bayangol district in early June 2013

Graph 4: Accessible crossing cuts in FIELD 2 project area



Indicator 1.2.2: # of walkway crossings that were changed/built according to the Accessibility Standards
Target—30
Actual—88

Activity 1.4 Monitor building and road construction for their accessibility to PWDs at different stages of planning and implementation by the Working Groups;

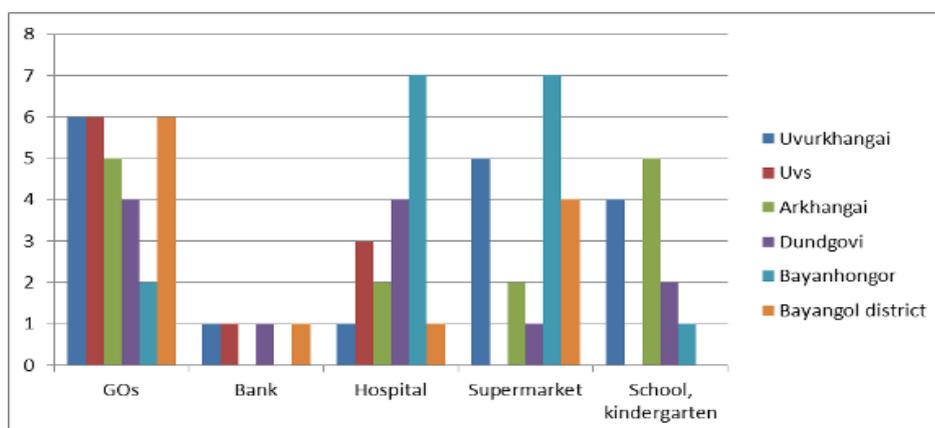
Throughout the project period, each Working Group focused on monitoring local buildings and road construction, aiming to improve the Accessibility Index of 45 buildings in the project areas. The Accessibility Index of high-use buildings is calculated based on available accessibility facilities: ramps, doors, handles, toilets. (Table 1, Accessibility Index)

Table 1: Accessibility Index

ACCESSIBILITY	INDEX IN COLOR	GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING
Very Good	Blue	Ramp in the main entrance, doors meet MNS 6055 standard, handrails are in the corridors, restroom facilities meet the MNS 6055 standard. Can access restroom and other places in the building.
Good	Green	Ramp in the main entrance, doors meet MNS 6055 standard, handrails in the corridors. Have access to other places in the building, but not to a restroom.
Satisfactory	Orange	Ramp in the main entrance and doors meet MNS 6055 standard. However, still cannot access other places in the building.
Bad	Red	Ramp in the main entrance, so access to the 1st floor but no accessibility to other places in the building.
Very bad	Black	No accessible facilities in the building.

By the end of the project, DPO assessors reported 82 high-use buildings with improved accessibility, including the Government House of Mongolia and Government Building #11, which houses the Mongolian National Human Rights Commission, the General Election Commission and other important government agencies. (Graph 5, Accessibility Index of High-use Buildings)

Graph 5: Accessibility Index of High-use Buildings



This achievement demonstrated that partnerships between informed government officials and active DPOs can make real changes in society. Both in UB and local areas, DPOs advocated for improved accessibility through frequent meetings with government officials, engaging owners of high-use

buildings, monitoring official orders, and trainings sessions about accessibility standards that included all these stakeholders. Below are some examples of successful advocacy:

- In Bayanhongor aimag, an engineer of the Provincial Department of Town Planning and member of the Working Group issued an order to support the aimag governor's order for implementation of accessibility standards. Those two orders, which required compliance to the accessibility standards, were delivered to all organizations in the aimag center in April 2012. A local DPO, Branch of Free Trade Union for People with Disabilities (PWDs), monitored the implementation of the two orders on 23 high-use buildings in June 2012. According to the monitoring result, 14 organizations have newly-built ramps in their main entrance.
- From April-June 2012, the aimag inspection engineer of Professional Inspection Agency (PIA) in Uvurhangai aimag developed blueprints for three standardized ramps for the food market, bank and cultural center. The Uvurhangai Branch of Wheelchair Users Association monitored the implementation in the newly built and renovated buildings. In June 2012, the DPO members introduced 20 organizations to the accessibility standards, involving the aimag inspection engineer and the aimag engineer on town planning in the meetings with building owners. As a result of these meetings and the active participation of local engineers in the DPO's advocacy activity, Uvurhangai aimag's center, Arvaiheer now has 16 buildings with compliant ramps.
- Through the FIELD 2 subgrant to the Universal Progress ILC for its Peer Counseling project, (described in detail on p. 25 of this report), ten project beneficiaries who had spent between two and 20 years living as shut-ins became active for human rights and accessibility. Among the organizations they visited were the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia where they obtained a promise from Mr. Byambadorj, Chief of the Commission, to build a ramp in the main entrance of the Commission's building by 15 May 2013. Mr. Byambadorj also agreed to officially contact other government organizations to request that they build similar accessible ramps at their buildings. He kept that promise, and now Government Building #11—which houses about 20 government and non-government organizations, including the General Election Commission, the Ministry of Economic Development, the National Vocational Center, State Department of Small and Medium Entrepreneurs and National Commission of Gender Equality—has a ramp that complies with national standards. All of these agencies and organizations are now accessible for citizens with any mobility issue.



Ramp in the Cultural Center in Uvurhangai aimag, 2012



Newly built ramp in the 16-floor government building #11

Indicator 1.2.1: # of buildings with increased Accessibility

Index

Target—45

Actual—82

Activity 1.5 Assist DPOs and PWDs in designing and carrying out advocacy and public education campaigns in Ulaanbaatar and aimags. (Barrier Free Days, TV programs, posters, training, social responsibility awards)

In Mongolia, the social model of disability is still a new approach, which means that understanding accessibility is new to many Mongolians. As such, the FIELD 2 team aimed to make 50 percent of local communities aware of accessibility issues with the expectation that with an appropriate understanding of accessibility issues and proper knowledge of accessibility standards, local communities will monitor accessibility standards' implementation and ensure government officials follow the characteristics of accessibility standards in the future.

To improve local communities' understanding of accessibility issues, the FIELD 2 team, along with Working Groups and DPOs, organized extensive awareness raising activities including conferences, meetings, media broadcasts, campaigns and training sessions. (Table 2, Awareness raising and participation rates by aimags)

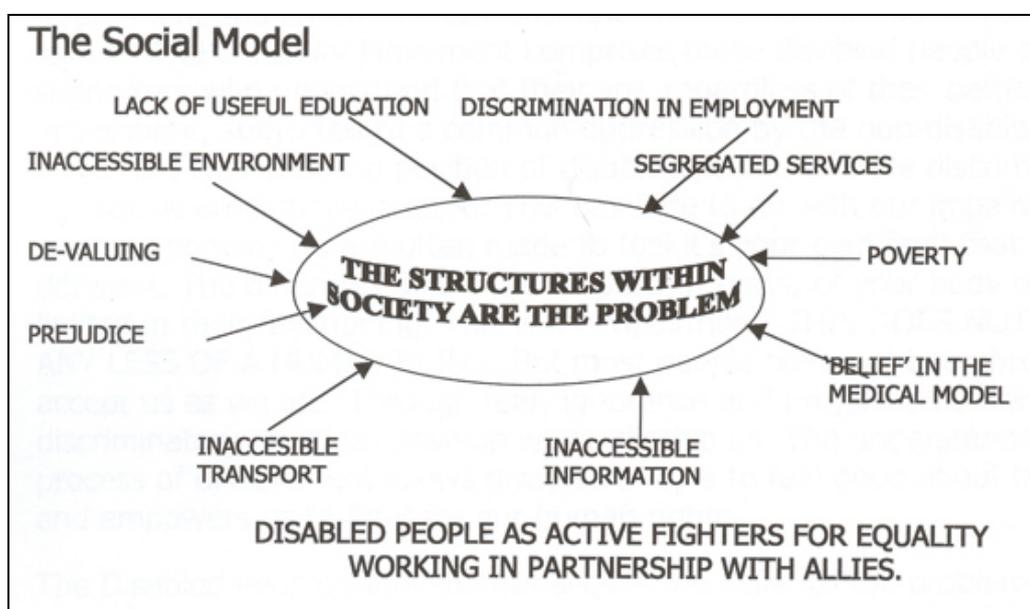


Table 2: Awareness raising and participation rates by Aimags

Project areas	Total	Barrier free day	Accessible environment campaigns	International day of PWDs
Arhangai	2201	77	1787	337
Uvurhangai	2042	150	1673	219
Uvs	2427	37	1539	851
Dundgobi	2111	64	1631	416
Bayanhongor	3038	120	2210	708
Bayangol UB	1698	220	1353	125
Total	13945	668	10621	2656

1. BARRIER FREE DAY EVENTS

To launch the FIELD 2 project, Mercy Corps' aimag staff and 12 DPOs of Arhangai, Dundgobi, Uvs, Bayanhongor aimags and Ulaanbaatar city organized Barrier Free Day events in their respective areas. These were jointly organized by government officials and DPO members, demonstrating that cooperation can work. In total, 668 local community members and delegates from 89 government agencies, DPOs and NGOs participated in these events. Government organizations (mostly FIELD 2 partners) were well represented, with attendees from the following departments: Provincial Department for Social Development, Provincial Department for Social Welfare Service, Provincial Professional Inspection Agency, and the Provincial Department for Land Affairs, Construction and Town Planning. The government officers expressed their willingness to build an inclusive environment in their aimags and implement accessibility standards within their competencies. Government organizations also presented their accomplished and planned activities for the PWDs and options for PWDs to get service from their respective organizations.



During the Barrier Free Day events, PWDs and children with disabilities, community members and government representatives had the opportunity to introduce themselves and socialize through various sports and cultural activities. PWDs competed with each other, playing darts, volleyball and chess and children with disabilities participated in the drawing competition called "My Dream."



US Ambassador, Jonathan Addleton, and USAID/Mission Director, Chuck Howell, join the marchers. Sep 2011

US Ambassador Jonathan Addleton and USAID/Mongolia Mission Director Chuck Howell both came out to celebrate the Barrier Free Day parade which started at the US Embassy. The parade demonstrated the idea of "universal access." To show that accessibility issues affect more citizens than just those with disabilities, parade participants used strollers, shopping carts, and wheeled cases to bring home the message.

On the way to Sukhbaatar Square, the endpoint of the parade and site of other events, the parade participants checked the accessibility of walkways, crossing cuts, buildings of the National University of Mongolia

and the main Municipal building of Ulaanbaatar. There was no walkway for pedestrians near the Municipal office of Ulaanbaatar, therefore participants of the parade had to weave their way between

cars and trucks in order to reach City Hall. None of the pedestrian walkway crossing cuts were accessible, and it took a lot of time to cross the road. One of the main buildings of the National University of Mongolia had a ramp outside and inside which were reasonably compliant with the accessibility standards, while the other main building of the University had a ramp at an impossible angle at the main entrance.

After the parade, the opening ceremony of the Barrier Free Day and PWDs' greeting concert took place in the Sukhbaatar Square. At the same time, PWDs showed and sold their products and handcrafts to the community and DPOs introduced their organizations.

Eight competitions were organized for attendants and interested people such as wheelchair racing, stretching ropes, darts, drawing, etc. The most interesting competition was the wheelchair race, in which 19 people --- 16 PWDs joined by people without disabilities --- was won by a wheelchair-dependent person. Twenty-three (23) children with disabilities took part in drawing and poetry/writing competitions. (Table 3, Children Winners) These events demonstrated that there is a space for PWDs in the broader community and that they bring talents and energy to that community.



Table 3: Children Winners

#	Children name	Competition	Rank	School
1	B.Enkhgerel	Drawing	1st	National Center for Rehabilitation
2	E.Enkhtuya	Drawing	2nd	School #25
3	S.Nandinzul	Drawing	3rd	School #30
4	B.Misheel	Essay writing	1st	School #25
5	Ch.Enkhsaikhan	Essay writing	2nd	School #25
6	N.Temuulen	Poetry	3rd	School #25

In total, 220 people participated in the Ulaanbaatar Barrier Free Day event. Local and nationwide media broadcasted information about the parade and Barrier Free Day event, including ten TV

channels, seven newspapers, two websites and three radio stations. During the event, the team distributed 1,126 leaflets on universal design and accessible buildings; another 1,200 leaflets were delivered during subsequent FIELD 2 activities.

2. “ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT” CAMPAIGNS

The “Accessible Environment” campaigns were designed to raise awareness about accessibility standards among local communities, especially government officials and civil society. In total, 10,193 people representing 27 government organizations, 22 CSOs, 24 DPOs and 20 private businesses participated in a variety of campaign activities over the life of the project. Local DPOs and Working Groups organized round table discussions, meetings, sporting competitions, essay writing and drawing competitions among school children, sign language training to government officials, media broadcasts and conferences. Highlights from the campaign are detailed below.

- In Arhangai aimag, eighty-four (84) school children submitted drawings to the Working Group. In January 2012 three winners in three age ranges were selected and awarded. As a result of the drawing competition, children recognized their role to build an inclusive environment in their surroundings and the needs and challenges of children with disabilities.



Drawings submitted by school children



Drawing of B. Bayarjaykhan, pupil 5g class, 1st school



B. Namuundari, 4b class, 3rd school



Z. Erkhembayer, 2a class, school 1

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in conjunction with the 976 Art Gallery and Max Mall, organized “The Art of Caring,” an exhibition of artwork by children in Arhangai in support of the rights of persons with disabilities in September 2012. When asked how they would promote inclusiveness, the children produced beautiful pieces of art in celebration of the contributions of the disabled to their communities, the Mongolian society, and the world. To help kick-off the “The Art of Caring,” six Paralympian athletes shared stories of their own personal journeys and triumphs that led them to London.



Ambassador Campbell keynotes Art of Caring show.

- At the start of the FIELD 2, local citizens’ awareness about accessibility was limited, which was reflected in the physical environment in project communities. For example, Uvurhangai aimag has a population of 27,000 with about 1,800 buildings. Of these, only 12 buildings were accessible. To raise the local community's awareness on accessibility and the importance of accessible buildings, the trained professionals of FIELD 2 project in Uvurhangai aimag organized a TV lesson in January and February of 2012 twice per month. According to the field office estimates, at least ten percent (or 2,700) of local citizens watched the TV lesson.
- In April 2012, members of the Uvurhangai Working Group organized a sporting competition among PWDs. The participants competed in the Mongolian National Sport competition where two people with visual disabilities took 1st and 2nd place in a track race. This shows how the aimag level competition can encourage PWDs to become nationally recognized sportspersons. In addition, in the framework of the campaign, the members of the Working Group developed two TV programs on the daily life of PWDs.
- In March 2012, the Working Group of Bayanhongor aimag organized an “Equal Life” conference. In total, 152 people participated in the event, including representatives of the Provincial Department of Social Welfare and Labor (PDSWL), members of local Citizens Representative Hural, as well as members of local CSOs and DPOs. During the conference, local government organizations introduced their activities to PWDs and assisted them in accessing state services. In turn, participating PWDs appealed to the local community (including government officials and private businesses) to establish accessible environments in their hometowns.
 - In Uvs aimag in April 2012, the Department of Health, Provincial Department of Social Welfare and Labor, Central Clinic, Department of Education and Culture, Branch of National Association of PWDs, Association of Parents with Disabled Children (APDC), and Tegsh duuren khoroo jointly organized “The 1st Conference of Children with Disabilities.” The goal of the conference was to improve children’s protection, increase their participation in society, expand social, health and educational services for children with disabilities, and raise awareness



Accessible facilities in Uvurhangai.

of the challenges they and their families face. Modest financial support for the conference came from FIELD 2, with substantial cost sharing coming from G-mobile in Uvs aimag, “Monos” pharmacy, Savings Bank and “Uvs Food” company, with 50 percent funding from Aimag Governor Office and 15 percent from the Center for Children.

In total, 87 people attended the conference, including 56 children with disabilities, four parents from the APDC, and 27 government officials. Twenty four children received a free medical check-up in the Central Clinic. Together with parents, children joined a workshop discussion called “Our Opportunities,” to identify the challenges and possible solutions to present to the aimag government.



As a result of the conference, participants developed an appeal to government organizations and private businesses as well as the local community:

- i. Change the school environment and attitudes positively;
 - ii. Establish special facilities for sport and development;
 - iii. Teach sign language to children with speech and hearing disabilities; and
 - iv. Set up special doctors’ service room for children with disabilities and reduce bureaucracy to provide health services to children with disabilities.
- Many people with disabilities are invisible to the government because they are not properly registered with local authorities. Sometimes it is a matter as simple as updating addresses with the proper agencies. The Dundgobi Branch of the National Association of Disabled People worked with the local bagh governor to update the home address of persons with severe disabilities to ensure that they and their families would receive timely, complete information. As a result, 10 persons with disabilities and their family members received information about the social welfare service which is described in the newly developed handout "Knowledge Traveled Among Households." The purpose of the handout is to improve the legal awareness of persons with a severe disability and that of their family members.

Accessibility Project—UB. One of the most ambitious awareness raising subgranted projects in FIELD 2 was the “Accessibility Project” of the DPO, Aivuun. In July 2012, Aivuun began its monitoring project by assessing the accessibility of 72 businesses in Bayangol district of Ulaanbaatar to choose 30 organizations. From the assessed organizations, only 16 percent had accessible ramps, 74 percent had an accessible main door and 61 percent had accessible doorways—but rarely in combination. As a result, 37 organizations (shops, banks, government buildings) were selected due to this high degree of inaccessibility and the essential services that were represented by these establishments Aivuun signed an MoU with the Governor of Bayangol district. According to the

MoU, the Governor's Office of Bayangol district would provide MNT 2.6 million to improve access in the district. The MoU also stated that the Bayangol District Governor, Ms. Amgalan, would establish a Working Group to enforce the implementation of accessibility standards. The Working Group members include the head of Aivuun, five government officials and two members of Mongolian National Association for PWDs in the Bayangol district.

Working together, Aivuun and the Bayangol district governor's office improved the legal and physical situation of citizens of the district. In the framework of the project, Aivuun trained 37 owners of private and public buildings on accessibility standards in September 2012. The DPO also developed and broadcast twice a six-part radio program to increase the positive attitude of the community towards people with disabilities and accessibility in the local community. On 29 September 2012, the Working Group organized a community event, "Accessibility for All," in which a total of 318 citizens from 31 khoros (zones) in Bayangol district participated and received information about accessibility standards.



Assessing building accessibility

The Bayangol Government Action Plan for 2012-2016 now includes a plan to "...establish an accessible infrastructure in apartment, school and public service buildings." Now, DPOs have a powerful tool to enforce government officials to implement the accessibility standards and build an inclusive environment in the respective sectors of government service. Furthermore, 12 high-use buildings became accessible. Aivunn advocated a variety of stakeholders and ultimately improved the Accessibility Index (Annex 3) of nine buildings and reached 428 people.

Based on the FIELD 2 project's awareness raising efforts, it can be said that the abovementioned community-targeted conferences, competitions and media broadcasts were cost-efficient and effective, reaching many people—with and without disabilities—to change attitudes towards social model of disability and broader inclusion of all citizens.

3. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PWDs

December 3rd is International Day for People with Disabilities, and in both 2011 and 2012, the FIELD 2 team joined local partners to celebrate. The project team organized campaigns around this global day of recognition, including conferences, roundtable discussions, and sporting competitions among PWDs, as well as capacity building trainings for social workers who were newly hired after the 2012 election. A total of 2,656 people participated in all activities and received information about rights of PWDs, local government services, and other important information to support independent living.

Discussions Lead to Policy Recommendations. Mercy Corps' subgrantee, Universal Progress, organized a scientific meeting on "Opportunity and Situation of PWDs to Live Independently" on 10 December 2012 to introduce the new concept from a technical perspective. The meeting sought to prove that when the social welfare system is appropriate, PWDs can live independently. In total, 58 people from 10 organizations, including representatives from the Ministry of Population Development

and Social Protection, Municipal Department of Social Welfare and Service, General Department of Social Welfare and Service, District Department of Social Welfare and Service of 6 districts, Mercy Corps, Mongolian Institute of Education, Institute “Enkh-Orchlon,” “Maral Elch” Foundation, School #25 and the Mongolian Association for the Blind. The topics and presenters were as follows:

- “Meaning of Independent Living,” Universal Progress DPO
- “Government Social Welfare Services for PWDs,” Aivuun DPO
- “Participation of NGOs, Government and Private Sector to Promote PWDs’ Independent Living,” Maral Elch Foundation
- “Opportunity to Build Capacity of PWDs using Community-based Social Welfare System,” Institute Enkh-Orchlon
- “Human Rights and Reproductive Health,” Municipal Department of Social Welfare and Service
- “PWDs’ Expectations for Community-based Social Welfare System,” Mongolian Institute of Education

After the presentations, the participants developed recommendations and gave them to the representative of the Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection (MoPDSP). They recommended funding DPOs to serve PWDs, review Community Based Social Welfare Service, identify PWDs’ needs to the service and implement demonstration project to try new approaches to serve for PWDs. As a result of this engagement, Universal Progress received funding from State Department of Social Welfare and Service in 2013 to deliver social care service to elderly and PWDs of Bayangol district. These recommendations were the first ever received by the MoPDSP from DPOs, institutions and government organizations concerning PWDs’ right to live independently. The Ministry is currently reviewing its current social welfare service and considering policies needed to support PWDs’ independent living.

Discussions change hospital intake procedures. The FIELD 2 team and local DPOs in Bayanhongor aimag organized a roundtable discussion to identify solutions to promote PWDs’ participation in social life and to protect their rights. Sixty (60) delegates from local DPOs, representatives of the “Equal Opportunity for All Children” project implemented by ADRA International, the Provincial Department of Social Policy and Development, the Department of Education and Culture, and the aimag hospital discussed future cooperation and opportunities to improve children with disabilities’ care and education. As a result of the roundtable, aimag hospital representatives agreed to serve children with severe disabilities upon arrival (without waiting) and ADRA International promised to involve mothers with children with disabilities in its livelihood supporting projects.

DPO Advocacy improves local accessibility. DPOs in Bayanhongor and Uvurhangai aimags visited nine organizations in their respective aimags, including supermarkets, trade centers, banks, hospitals, bagh centers and schools. Only two out of nine organizations had ramps at the main entrance, but these were not compliant with the national accessibility standards. As a result of this visit, two organizations promised to make changes to their ramps according to the accessibility standards, and the governor agreed to build a ramp in the bagh center office in summer (of 2013).

Personal visits made people feel included. On 3 December 2012, Working Group members in Bayanhongor, Uvurhangai, Dundgobi and Arhangai aimags visited 35 households with family members who have a severe disability to greet them on International Day of People with Disabilities. The visitors brought gifts of warm clothes and food such as rice, sunflower oil, and milk. The PWDs and the parents of children with disabilities were surprised and delighted, and expressed their gratitude.

Events bring whole communities together. Throughout the FIELD 2 project area, conferences and sporting competitions brought PWDs and their communities together. In Dundgobi, a total of 749 PWDs and their caretakers discussed PWDs challenges and drafted activities to be included in the Aimag Governor’s Action Plan. These activities were finalized after the conference by DPOs and submitted to the Aimag Governor on behalf of all PWDs and DPOs as well as related government agencies. At the end of the conference, the participants joined in sporting competitions such as: chess, table tennis and volleyball. The Mongolian National Volleyball team followed the conference with a match and the presentation of a volleyball to the sport facilities to encourage local PWDs.

Free medical check-up for women with disabilities. Many women with disabilities struggle to receive medical check-ups. Therefore, an important activity on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities was a reproductive health check-up for women with disabilities. In total, 16 women with disabilities used the opportunity to see a doctor.

Local media reaches the whole community. In Uvurhangai aimag, the FIELD 2 team and local DPOs organized four media broadcasts during a two-week campaign in December 2012.

- A live TV discussion focused on PWDs’ employment opportunities and accessibility standards in the workplace. Eight representatives from government organizations and local DPOs discussed PWDs’ employment status and answered questions from the viewing audience via telephone. Fifteen local people called in to clarify their understanding about employment of PWDs and accessibility standards. During the broadcast, officials called for three things:
 1. change perception of PWDs from “care receivers” to “employees”;
 2. reflect accessibility standards in new and renovated building; and
 3. enforce laws which mandate private businesses to build accessible environments.
- Local DPOs developed and broadcast a “Day in the Life of a PWD” program through local TV to help decisionmakers and local communities better understand current situations and challenges of the day-to-day lives of people living with disabilities and their families.
- Local DPOs televised four short videos on the human rights of PWDs.
- Local DPOs placed a billboard on the main street in the aimag center and printed and distributed 500 copies of an accessibility leaflet during the two-week activities.

Indicator 1.1.1: Increased public awareness of accessibility issues

Target—50%
Actual—67.3%

Cooperation with Ministry reaches national audience. The FIELD 2 team and the MoPDSP developed an FM radio program on the UN Convention on the Rights of PWDs, its importance, the social model of disability and how to monitor implementation of the Convention. The MoPDSP broadcast the program on seven radio channels simultaneously for 20 minutes twice on 3 and 4 December 2012, reaching a national audience.

Objective # 2. Improve livelihood opportunities, capacities and life skills of PWDs through provision of quality Community Based Social Welfare Services (CBSWS) to PWDs in collaboration with the Provincial Departments of Labor and Social Welfare

Activity 2.1 *Hold competitive calls for proposals jointly with the PDLSW among DPOs to provide small grants on CBSWS to PWD groups*

Mercy Corps held two rounds of subgrants to enable DPOs to provide Community Based Social Welfare Services (CBSWS) during the FIELD 2 project. In total, 34 proposals from local DPOs were received. The original plan was that FIELD 2 would jointly support the local DPOs proposals with the respective Provincial Department of Labor and Social Welfare (PDLSW) in accordance with the MoU signed to that effect in autumn 2011. However, following the 2012 elections, the new local governments declined to fund any proposal which had been approved by their predecessors. Only two DPO proposals obtained joint funding from the FIELD 2 project and PDLSW prior to this decision, far short of the original target of 15.

In the second call for proposals in October 2012, FIELD 2 had re-established collaborative relations with the new PDLSW authorities and found common ground to jointly review and approve subgrant projects. As a result of this cooperation, all proposals of second round RFA qualified for joint funding from the government. This led to 20 initiatives for CBSWS getting funded. While FIELD 2 was happy to have the cooperation of the PDLSW, the overall result of the previous delay led to a shortfall in the project’s target. (See Table 4, Subgrantees by Location and Year.)

Table 4: Subgrantees by Location and Year

	2012	2013
AR	APDC	MNAWU
	Eye For Hope	New Start
	Blind Association	
UH	Free Trade Union PWDs	MNAWU
	MNAWU	
DG	APDC	Blind Association
	NAPWDS	
BH	APDC	APDC
		MNAWU
UV	APDC	Blind Association
	Free Trade Union	Equal Participation
	NAPWDS	
UB	Aivuun	
	Universal Progress ILC	

Indicator 2.1.2: # of targeted CBSWS initiatives that serve PWDs

Target—30
Actual—21

Activity 2.2 *Assess, select and award grants to DPOs to provide CBSWS to PWDs for improving their income, capacities, life skills, self-esteem and team working abilities.*

An important objective of the FIELD 2 subgrants was to support the income generation, life skills and self-esteem of PWDs in the communities where the project was active. The 21 awarded proposals were selected based on the DPO’s capacity to implement the proposed activity, the importance of submitted actions, and the potential for impact on the livelihoods of PWDs.

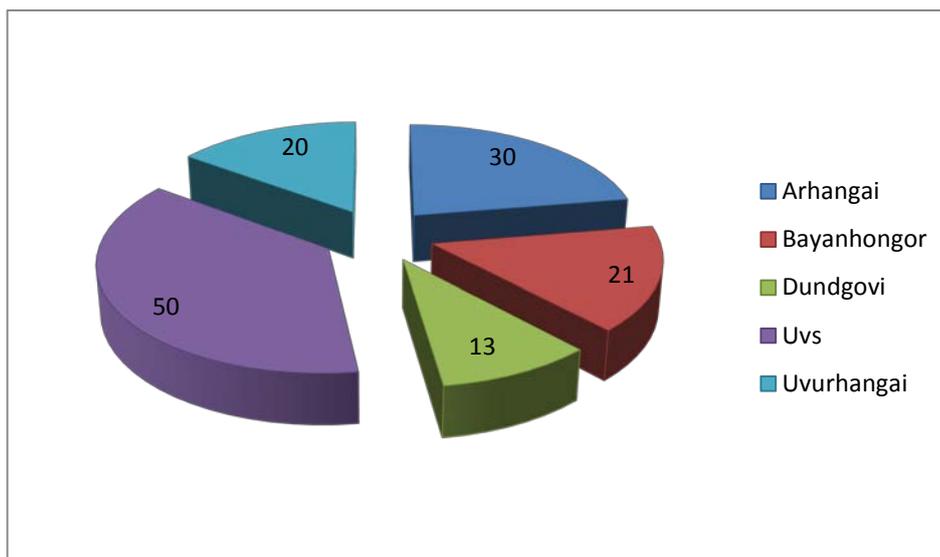
Improved Income. FIELD 2’s project goal was to improve household income of 120 PWDs (Annex 2, Performance Monitoring Plan). Through the efforts and impact of the 21 subgranted projects, 134 PWDs improved their income an average of USD 400. (Graph 6, PWDs reporting greater income). These 134 PWDs earned a combined USD 53,660 during the project. More importantly, 37 permanent and 36 temporary jobs were created as a result of the subgranted projects, which ensured that

Indicator 2.2.1: # of PWDs reporting greater income

Target—120
Actual—134

improved livelihoods will extend into the future.

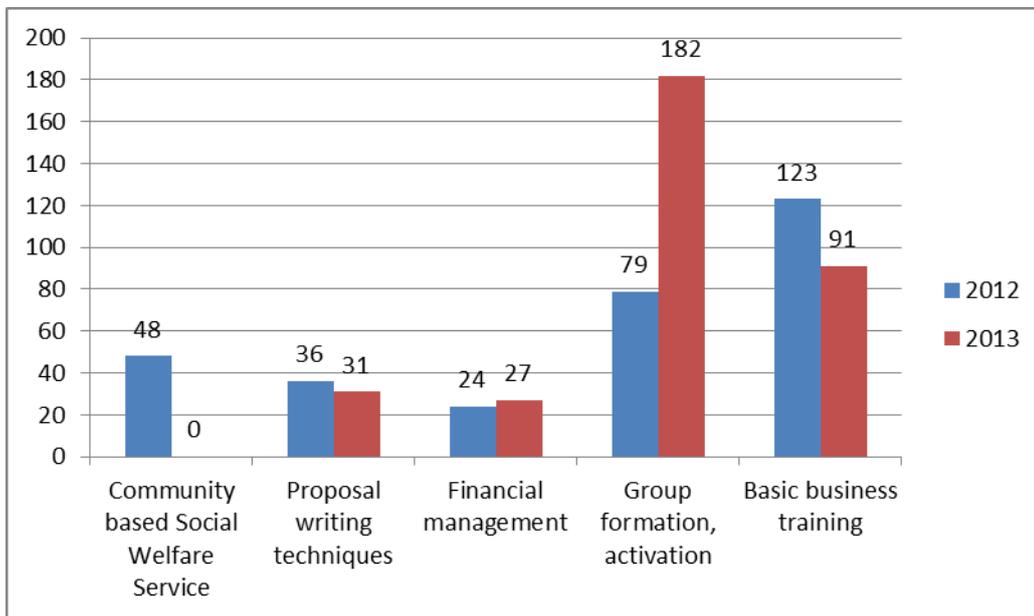
Graph 6: PWDs Reporting Greater Income



In addition to conducting business skills training for PWDs and their family members, FIELD 2 provided equipment to help PWDs start their own businesses. This mix of information and provision

of basic equipment helped PWDs advance towards their economic goals. (Graph 7, Business Skills and Services)

Graph 7: Business Skills and Services



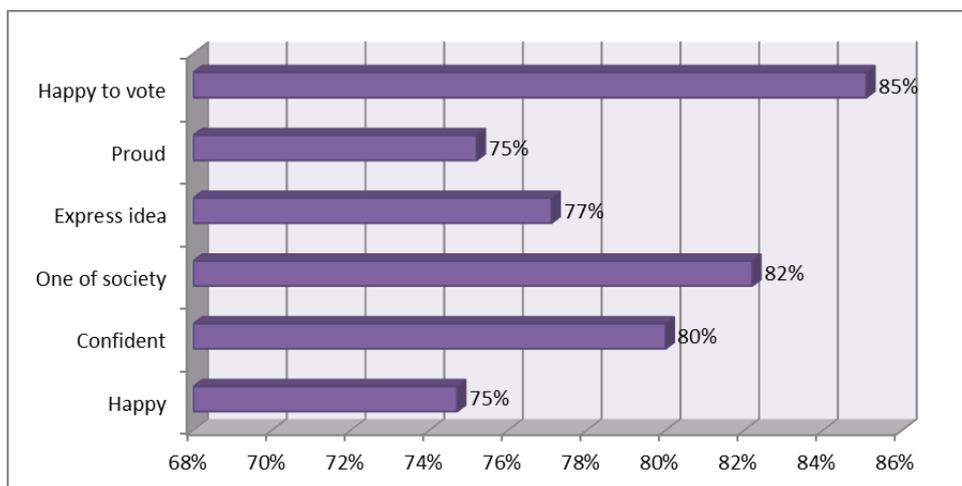
Self-esteem, independence and inclusion. In the 2011 project baseline, all focus group participants said that the lack of access to government buildings, the lack of access to credit, the low participation by PWDs in decision making, and poor social attitudes towards PWDs all resulted in negative feelings and low self-esteem. Mercy Corps set a target of improving these levels among 240 PWDs. Through the mix FIELD 2 activities—either from subgrantees’ efforts or those of Mercy Corps directly—this goal was surpassed by far. According to an end-of-project telephone survey of 455 PWDs who participated in FIELD 2 activities, 387 PWDs (82 percent) reported a substantial improvement in their self esteem. They attributed that improvement to the greater ease with which they can now enter into high-use buildings such as banks and receive services; 370 of respondents say that they now receive their social welfare pension from the bank unassisted. Furthermore, 382 PWDs state that they are now able to shop independently, and an equal number now identify a network of friends in the local community which they previously did not have. This demonstrates that FIELD 2 project has made a real change in the local area not only in relation to construction but also in people’s lives and attitudes. (Graph 8, Access to Community Life)

Graph 8: Access to Community Life (2013), %



During a mid-term survey conducted in autumn 2012, 401 PWDs responded positively to the statement: “I am happy that I can vote based on my knowledge and experience from last June” (85.1 percent); 371 PWDs are “Happy that I can be served by my bank”. Additionally, 374 PWDs have more self-confidence (80 percent). The midterm evaluation of FIELD 2 project also showed that 171 PWDs expressed their self-esteem had improved by participating in various activities which were organized by local DPOs and partner government organizations in the framework of the project. By attending the training sessions, cooperating with each other to run businesses, and being involved in conferences and meetings, local PWDs began socializing and interacting with the community. (Graph 9, PWDs’ self-esteem improvement)

Graph 9: PWDs self-esteem improvement



A formal end-of-project assessment was not conducted for three reasons. First, the mid-term evaluation was conducted with just nine months remaining in the project time, delayed due to the impact of the 2012 national elections. Secondly, because the mid-term figures already surpassed the original project targets. Thirdly, project funds were extremely limited by the last six months of the project, and were concentrated on supporting DPO partners in their activities, rather than on another assessment.

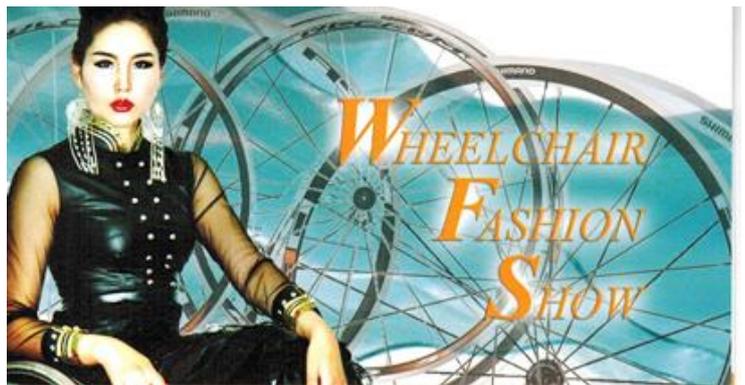


Peer Counseling participants at closing session.

Of all the FIELD 2 subgranted projects, the “Peer Counseling Project” designed and implemented by Universal Progress focused most creatively on improving PWDs’ self-esteem and confidence. The project aimed to psychologically rehabilitate 10 PWDs who had spent between two and 20 years living as shut-ins by getting them to help each other. During the project, the participants engaged in a range of social activities that brought them into the community, including theaters, restaurants, resorts, supermarkets, banks and government organizations. For several participants, this was the first time they had ever entered such places. Two participants even traveled to Japan with the members of Universal

Progress to learn about the independent living approach taken in that country.

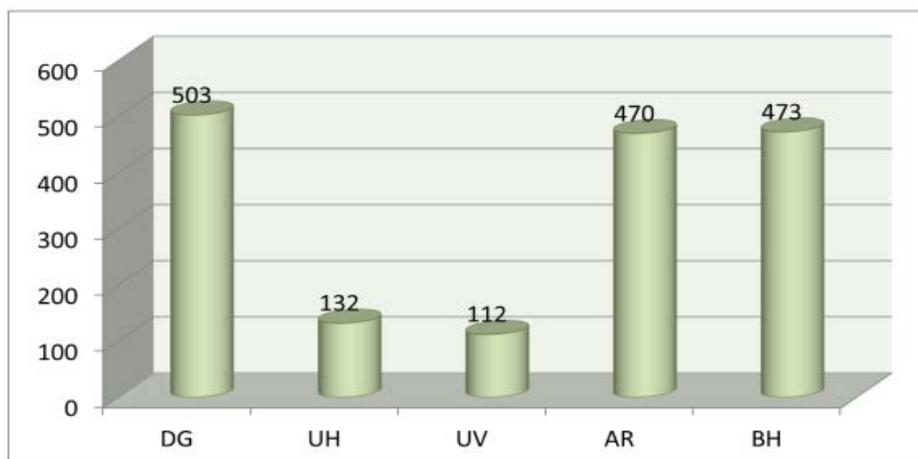
By project end, all of the participants noted that their lives and the lives of their family members had changed. It was this group of “shut-ins now activists” that advocated for improved accessibility of Government Building #11, noted earlier in this report. Not only did they report greatly improved self-esteem, two participants had become students of the National Center for Rehabilitation and Development and two other participants looked for and found permanent jobs. The program also significantly impacted their family members, who were released from their role of care taker and were able to seek jobs (four have already found permanent jobs). In June 2013, the group held a Wheelchair Fashion Show that included a wide range of financial and emotional supporters, including XacBank, Interpress, D-Light, World Wine, and others. The fashion show even ended with a wedding dress and tuxedo—modeled by a couple who are actually engaged and are both wheelchair dependent.



Activity 2.3 *Organize training and capacity building activities for DPOs, social welfare workers and PWD groups on grant management, business development, group formation, PWDs rights, and the social model.*

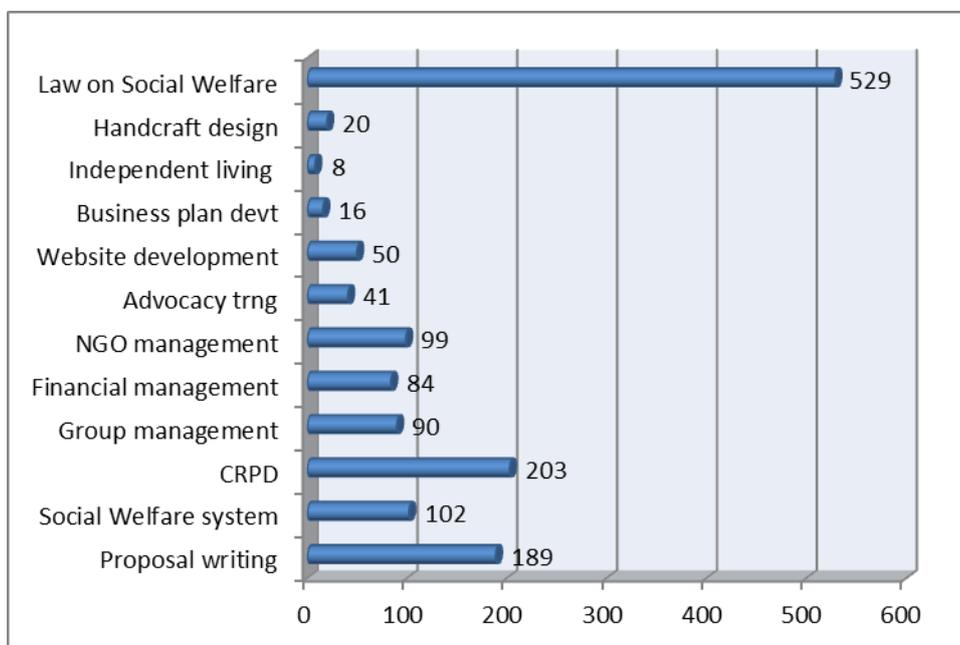
FIELD 2 conducted technical and organizational capacity building training for local and national DPOs. The FIELD 2 team conducted 13 specific trainings in which 1,431 civil society partners participated. This figure is double counted as some individuals attended more than one training. (Graph 10, Local and national DPO training participants)

Graph 10: Local and national DPO training participants



Technical capacity. By far, the most active aimags were Dundgobi (503), Bayanhongor (473) and Arhangai (470). In Uvurhangai, the project was undermined due to the fact that the leader of the main DPO had personal issues affecting his ability to follow through on original commitments and plans. Uvs engagement was low as DPOs in that aimag were not building on FIELD 1 activities as was the case in Dundgobi, Uvurhangai and Arhangai. DPOs in that aimag were in the learning stages of disability issues and local DPOs were learning how to cooperate with international organizations and government organizations. In the beginning project activities were slower than planned, however, local partners learned quickly and by project mid-point were at an equal level with the other aimags. (Graph 11, Training to local and national DPOs by topic)

Graph 11: Training to local and national DPOs by topic



Indicator 2.1.1: # of addressed issues of PWDs to relevant organizations by DPOs

Target—50
Actual—772

The most requested and delivered trainings were about the Law on Social Welfare and UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). This was due to the 2012 changes in the Law on Social Welfare and because those amendments were themselves informed by Mongolia's ratification of the CRPD. In short, these two legal frameworks are the most important for DPOs to be well-versed in as they prepare and sustain engagement with government officials at any level.

As the technical skill improved, DPOs found that their reputation across the local community and with government officials also increased. The rate at which DPOs were approached to resolve or assist local PWDs and their families far exceeded original project expectations. The common services for which PWDs reached out to DPOs for assistance on included:

- To receive legal advice and for mediation with other relevant organizations
- To attend trainings and workshops /how to write project proposals, establish unions or legal entities, prepare business plans, learn organizational management, study standards
- To receive rehabilitation services
- To participate in public activities
- To receive reimbursement of tuition fees
- To benefit from financial aid /loans, grants, economic support
- To receive approval of land ownership

According to the midterm evaluation, 772 PWDs received government services and took part in the trainings and workshops. Again, no end survey was completed because the actual numbers were so substantially beyond the original targets.

Indicator 2.1.4: # of people whose self-esteem is improved

Target—240

Actual—371

Organizational capacity. To assess and build DPO organizational capacity, FIELD 2 used the Smart Growth tool. This is the same organizational capacity tool that was developed and used during the USAID-funded TAN project and continues to be used with the 58 subgrant partners in the USAID-funded APPEAL project. To assess the impact of the project on the organizational development of local and national DPOs, the FIELD 2 team conducted its DPO Organizational Capacity Assessment twice during the project period—once in 2012 and again in 2013. The OCI is based on the 10 characteristics of an organization:

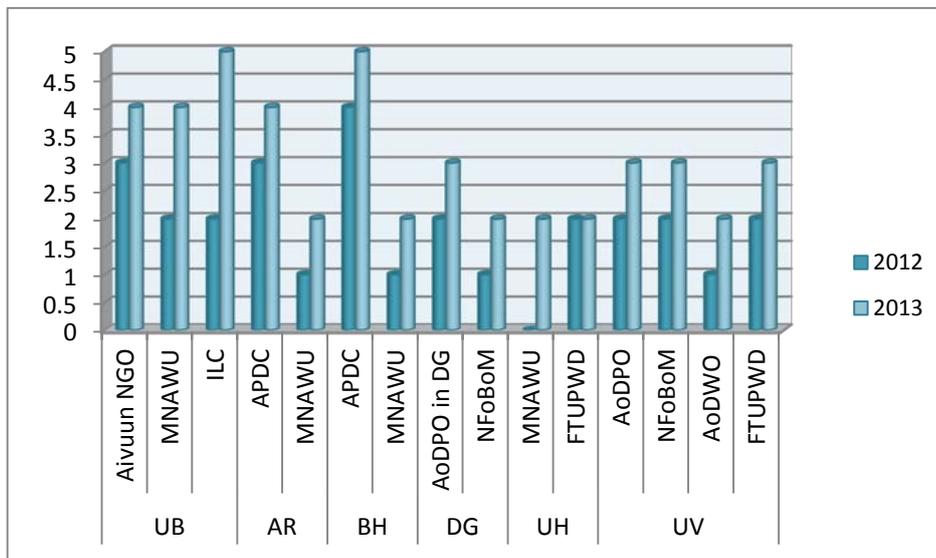
1. Mission
2. Strategy
3. Implemented projects and programs
4. Steering Committee operation and sustainability
5. Human Resource and capacity
6. Fundraising
7. Financial management
8. Office facilities and technology
9. Marketing and communication
10. Ability to make changes in society

DPOs were asked to use a multiple choice survey to self-assess capacity. Based on these answers, the DPOs were organized into one of six main stages of organizational development:

- 1. Determining organization's goal.** The organization is first established. People identify others they want to work with and begin to cooperate and work toward a single goal. In this stage, the group determines the organization's goal, mission, vision, and main business, identifies clients, and determines partners.
- 2. Initial start-up.** In this stage, the organization seeks funding to implement its business, receives start-up funding which will not continue past this stage, improves staff capacity, and has one or two permanent staff and founders that play a main role in all activities.
- 3. Grow and develop.** During this stage, the organization establishes a Steering Committee that focuses the organization's strategy and reputation, trains staff, develops the organization's internal rules and documents, develops a strategy plan, tries to identify clients' demand and choose reliable clients and partners, evaluates its implemented projects and programs for lessons learnt, and begins to establish a reputation (including a website).
- 4. From centralized authority to representatives.** In this stage, the organization has a clear organizational structure with several departments, skilled staff, permanent funding sources and a strong reputation. The Steering Committee has several committees to monitor the organization's activities. Staff is professional and initiates new ideas for improvement which are immediately implemented. The number of donor organizations increases and the organization has a recognized brand. Work is done using information technology. Staff is accustomed to using the work plan and adjusting it when necessary.
- 5. Develop organizational structure—become professional and monitor.** In this stage, the organization's reputation reaches its highest level and its professionalism. It may be contacted regularly by other organizations hoping to collaborate and learn from its experience. The work load is high and the organization begins to choose more profitable contracts and turn down small requests. Staff members begin to work as a team and learn to fill in for each other when someone is absent. The organization develops its quality standard and has an extensive database and resources. The founders take on the role of coordinating rather than implementing. The organization starts to prioritize its long-term strategy and has an impact on the local community and society. The organization starts to hire new staff to fulfill all agreed contracts, which can bring along with it the risk of failure due to lack of new staff's knowledge and skills. Because the organization is dominant in the sector, it may stop listening to constructive criticism which might be useful to improve and prevent loss of reputation.
- 6. Re-born - reforming.** If an organization successfully navigates the previous stage's risks, it is time to renew strategy, vision, and mission and to review structure. If the initial strategy, vision and mission do not fit an organization's operations and/or market demand, these must be reviewed and revised based on the current situation. All departments and branches implement activities independently. The organization starts to implement nationwide programs with other partners to extend reach.

FIELD 2 worked with 15 of the 21 subgrantees to help them move along the organizational capacity index (OCI). When first tested, the average of those 15 DPOs was 1.86, where organizations are moving from establishing what the goal or purpose of the organization is to just starting to formalize as an institution. (Graph 12, DPOs' OCI ratings). Building partnerships is an important part of this transition. As such, DPOs' willingness to reach out to government officials and a range of stakeholders in their communities was consistent with this OCI level. Nearly all DPOs improved their organizational development by one level, which given the multi-dimensional nature of the Index is a significant step. Two DPOs improved their organizational development by two levels. Given the relatively short amount of time they had to work on organizational development, this change is remarkable. By project's end, the average OCI was 3.06, meaning that these DPOs are now poised to grow and develop. The potential for future action that this improved capacity represents for PWDs and their families is tremendous, but fragile.

Graph 12: DPOs OCI ratings (2012-2013)



Although the FIELD 2 target was for local DPOs to improve their OCI by an average of 1.5 percent, the target was missed by just .2 percent, with a final improvement on aggregate of 1.3 percent. The FIELD 2 team assesses the following reasons for the shortfall:

- Eight out of 15 DPOs are newly established organizations which focused more on human resources and team building rather than higher levels of organizational capacity.
- One DPO in Uvurhangai aimag had a decrease in its organizational development because its leader left the DPO for personal reasons.
- Events in 2012 related to the Provincial Department of Social Welfare and Protection (noted earlier), deterred local DPOs ability to cooperate government organizations which would have improved their OCI score.

Indicator 2.1.1: % increase in organizational capacity index score for DPOs
Target—1.5
Actual—1.3

Activity 2.4 *Promote and disseminate project activities, success stories and lessons learned through local media, meetings and publications.*

The FIELD 2 project team worked constantly with partners and stakeholders to share stories and best practices as widely as possible.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Media proved to be a powerful tool for increasing the awareness and understanding of accessibility standards and changing local communities’ attitudes towards people with disabilities. During the project period, news outlets covered FIELD 2 activities 54 times. Because TV programs were

broadcast during the evening news peak, we estimate that 10 percent of the FIELD 2 project area received information from each single TV broadcast. (Table 5, Estimated TV viewers in FIELD 2 Areas).

Table 5: Estimated TV viewers in FIELD 2 Areas

Target area	Broadcasting Outlets	Total Population (2012 NSO)	10% of population as TV viewer
Arhangai	3	83,900	8,390
Uvurhangai	5	100,000	10,000
Uvs	12	72,600	7,260
Dundgobi	3	37,400	3,740
Bayanhongor	2	76,300	7,630
Bayangol, UB	29	230,000	23,000
Total	54	600,000	60,000

During the FIELD 2 project period, not only TV programs but also radio programs were broadcast to deliver messages to local communities. For example:

- The opening of the FIELD 2 project Barrier Free Day was the first activity to be broadcast on a variety of media. Twelve television outlets, seven newspapers, two websites and three radio channels covered events in UB and the aimags and their audiences about the FIELD 2 project. (Table 6, Barrier Free Day Coverage)

Table 6: Barrier Free Day Coverage

Area	TV	Newspaper	Web site	Radio
Ulaanbaatar	TB5 Aist Mongolia ETB Shuud TB	Ardiin erkh Today Daily news Social mirror Era news	Shuud.mn news.mn	National radio FM 98.5 FM 100.9
Arhangai aimag	AB TV Tamir TV	Life of Arhangai		
Uvurhangai aimag	Arvaiheer TV UV TV			
Bayanhongor aimag	TV10 Bayanhongor TV	Bayanhongor Times		
Uvs aimag	Sama MBC			
Dundgobi aimag	0	0	0	0
Total	12	7	2	3

- In 2012, under its Accessibility Project, Aivuun developed a six-part series of radio programs which were broadcast on national radio twice for 10 minutes. The radio programs gave a basic understanding of the social model of disability, human rights of PWDs and accessibility

standards. In another radio program in July 2012, Universal Progress and Aivuun shared their experiences from a visit to Japan and what they learned about that country's independent living concept.

- During the accessibility assessment of the Bayangol district buildings at the beginning of the Accessibility Project, Aivuun's director gave an interview to Mongolian National TV. The interview aired twice that day during the peak news program. At the end of the interview, DPO activists appealed to building owners to join with them to build accessible environment for all citizens of Bayangol district.
- The Working Group of Dundgobi aimag developed and broadcast a 40-minute TV program twice in July 2012 on the topic of "Inclusive Environment for Equal Opportunity." The main goal of the program was to appeal to local government and private organizations to make their buildings standards compliant.
- In 2011 in Uvs, the branch of the Blind Association broadcast a TV program about Mr. E. Gantulga, a 28 year old wheelchair user, to raise awareness of the potential of people with disabilities. Gantulga produces handcrafts made by beads and sells them locally. Following the broadcast, a local business development service provider, Business Linkage, helped him to develop a business plan and secure a MNT 500,000 loan from Xac Bank in conjunction with Mercy Corps' Loan Guarantee Mechanism. Gantulga's business plan was to provide youth and tourists with handmade bead products. He paid back the loan in January 2013 and his business is now growing.

Mongolian National TV channel interviewing Ya Avirmed, head of "Aivuun" DPO 2011



INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

During the project, Working Groups in the project target areas developed and distributed leaflets, posters and manuals. In total, 6,916 copies of publications were distributed to the project's local communities and Ulaanbaatar. For example:

- In the first event of FIELD 2 project, the Barrier Free Day in September 2011, the project team and partner DPOs distributed over 1,100 leaflets on accessibility standards to the Ulaanbaatar. The leaflet aimed to inform the community about the FIELD 2 project goals and objectives as well as the universal design principle as a basis of the accessibility standard.
- Another leaflet was developed and published by the FIELD 2 team in November 2011 and reprinted twice during the project period. At first, 2,000 copies were published in November 2011 and distributed to the project target area; another 2,650 copies were published for a Voter Education campaign in June 2012.
- In June 2012, the Working Group in Arhangai aimag developed and published 300 copies of an accessibility brochure and distributed it to seven DPOs, the Provincial Professional Inspection Agency and the Provincial Department of Town Planning.
- In the Accessibility Project, Aivuun DPO developed and published 400 posters for each accessibility standard—a total of 800 posters—and distributed them to the organizations in Bayangol district. Five hundred (500) copies of the accessibility manual were also distributed.

- During the Voter Education campaign in May-June 2012, the DPOs network published maps showing the polling station's location in each target area, as well as 600 copies of the manual to build accessible polling stations and 100 copies of an audio book to explain the election process to people with visual disabilities.

Website. As FIELD 2 DPOs partners increased their capacity, their reputations also increased locally and in Mongolian society. The Association of US Graduates in Mongolia (MASA) funded and provided technical assistance to establish and maintain www.bidchadna.mn, a website which is now operated independently by Universal Progress and Aivuun DPO. Through this site, DPOs can provide up-to-date information to PWDs, link job seekers to employers, sell hand-made products of PWDs to communities, and show locations of accessible high-use buildings in UB.

Indicator 1.1.1: Increased public awareness of the accessibility issues

Target—50%

Actual—67.3%

Objective # 3. Increased number of People with Disabilities who exercise their right to vote as the issue is addressed through DPOs in national and local level before 2012 election

In the fourth quarter of the FIELD 2 project, USAID supplemented Mercy Corps' funding to implement a short-term activity to generate higher participation of voters with disabilities than witnessed during the 2008 election. Through voter education, election monitoring training for DPO members, and advocacy campaigns, this initiative was implemented Ulaanbaatar, Darhan-Uul, Bayanhongor, Uvurhangai, Arhangai, Dundgobi and Uvurhangai aimags.

As a result, national DPOs established a fruitful partnership with the General Election Committee (GEC) and addressed the accessibility of the polling stations for the first time in Mongolia. DPOs monitored 60 polling stations in Ulaanbaatar districts and another 30 stations in aimags. The success of this advocacy effort was seen on Election Day, when most of the monitored polling stations had made adjustments to aid voters with disabilities; many used magnifying glasses for voters with visual impairment, some used portable ramps for wheelchair users, etc. Voter turnout among PWDs doubled. After the election, the national DPOs submitted specific recommendations to the GEC, such as placing all polling stations on ground floor, using mobile booths for mobile ballots to secure the confidentiality, and using a plastic cover for ballots to ensure vote secrecy. Although the GEC funded voter education actions during the 2013 presidential elections, the results were not the same, because the DPOs did not have funding for their own actions.



Training to DPOs on "Voter Education for PWDs"2011

Activity 3.1 *Hire activity coordinator from DPO network*

Mercy Corps conferred with our partner DPOs in Ulaanbaatar at the beginning of the Voter Education initiative to identify an activity coordinator. By consensus, Ms. Chuluundolgor, Head of the National Association for Wheelchair Users, was selected due to her experience and the high regard in which members of the DPO network hold her. It was a good choice. In the end, her efforts on the accessibility for voters with disabilities and the improvement in election administration in general were recognized by the nation. In May 2013, she was awarded the nation's highest civilian honor in absentia,¹ during a national event honoring Mongolia's PWD community.



Training to local PWDs on election processes

Activity 3.2 *Issue call for small grants to develop nationwide education campaign to improve awareness of citizens regarding the right to vote*

Mercy Corps contracted with seven DPOs in six aimags and Ulaanbaatar city. In Ulaanbaatar, under the Business Incubator Center of People with Disabilities, 11 national DPOs formed a network to run the voter education activities. In total, MNT 16.8 million was contracted for this activity; more than 6000 PWD directly benefited from voter education trainings. Through these activities, 18 local and national DPOs improved their capacity to monitor the election process. Two DPOs received GEC accreditation and all others secured mandates through them; they formed the largest block of domestic election monitors during the 2012 elections.

Together with the NGO Voter Education Center, Mercy Corps organized “Voter Education for Persons with Disabilities” training for 14 activists from six DPOs. The DPO representatives studied the differences between old and new election laws, the new electronic reading system for the ballots, and the requirements to monitor the elections. All the participants rapidly developed an enthusiasm and willingness to improve participation of PWD through improving voter education and awareness about all people's right to vote.

Activity 3.3 *Award grants to DPOs to implement advocacy for inclusive voter education, improved accessibility at polling stations and increased opportunity of voting through mobile ballot boxes.*

Voter education. Following the ToT (noted above), the 15 national and local DPOs received grants and trained 81 volunteers on their right to vote, how to fill out ballot papers, and the location of PWD accessible polling stations. Those volunteers in turn reached 672 PWDs and provided them with that critical voting information. In addition, DPOs organized two media broadcasts through 11 national and UB based TV channels with information on how to fill in voting ballots and on voting rights.



Demonstration of election process. Head of GEC, MC staff and DPO delegate

One of the main activities to raise the awareness of local communities on the election process was a DPOs organized demonstration of the election process in Independence Square in UB. The head of the General Election Committee and participated in the event, and 560 people received services and advice on

¹ She was unable to attend as her first child, a son, was born that very day.

their rights to vote, the Law on Election, and how to fill in voting ballots. This election was totally different than in the past because of new reading machines in polling stations and the newly approved Law on Election. During the demonstration event, 176 people were taught how to fill the new paper ballot and 384 people received advice on the newly changed Law on Election.

Accessible polling stations. In May 2012, the DPO network signed an MoU with the GEC and began assessing the accessibility of 60 UB polling stations. Over a third (37 percent) of the initial polling stations were on the second floor or higher, 10 percent were located in the basement, and 38 percent of polling stations were under renovation. Only 15 percent of the assessed polling stations were accessible for people with mobility difficulties just six weeks from election day. Working with the GEC, the DPO network organized online training for 1069 polling station commissions. In addition, DPO network delegates worked in the polling stations in UB and personally advocated for improved accessibility to 91 government officials through 13 meetings.



Newly built ramp at the polling station

Activity 3.4 *Establish dialogue among stakeholders to integrate VwD interventions.*

In May 2012, the DPO network in Ulaanbaatar organized a stakeholders meeting among government and civil society organizations to build partnerships on voter education activities for PWDs. Participants included representatives from the following organizations: GEC, Human Rights Commission, National Human Rights Program Committee at Ministry of Justice, seven DPOs, Voter Education Center, USAID, NGO MONFEMNET, Mercy Corps, Mongolian National Radio, UBS TV and Eagle TV.

The DPO network presented their concerns about the election and PWD participation to the GEC and submitted the official recommendations of the Accessible Environment campaign. The recommendations included the following:

- Feature the logo of political parties or photo of the candidates on the ballots to help voters with visual impairments or illiterate people;
- Make accessible polling stations: place mobile ramps choose ground floors, provide enough space for wheelchair users and ensure the ballot reader machine is at an appropriate height;
- Provide magnifying glass, waiting seats or free line-up service for PWDs;
- Assign people from outside the district to take around mobile ballot boxes. PWDs who vote via the mobile ballot boxes risk the confidentiality of their vote because the polling station workers are the same people who provide services to the PWDs. PWDs fear that if they don't vote for the party suggested by the horoo worker, they would not benefit from social welfare services until the next elections when the horoo worker would likely be replaced.

Activity 3.5 *Conduct end-line survey of participating DPOs and VwDs in July after 2012 election.*

At the end of the Voter Education campaign, the DPO network conducted an end-line survey among PWDs and polling stations. The survey results showed the following improvements in the election process:

- Participation of voters with disabilities doubled when compared to the election of 2008 from 34.7 percent in 2008 to 70 percent in 2012.
- During the initiative, accessibility of the polling stations went from 15 percent to 60 percent in monitored areas. In addition 32 voters added their names to the voters list.
- Four recommendations (noted above) were adopted by the GEC for immediate effect.
- After the 2012 Voters with Disabilities activities, Mercy Corps attended the AGENDA General Election Network for Disability Access conference to discuss the program approach and impact. During the conference, the Mongolian GEC invited conference organizer, Ms. Yusdiana, Adviser to the Indonesian Disabled People's Association and head of the AGENDA Network, to come to Mongolia and advise on policies and strategies that will promote greater inclusion of and participation by voters with disabilities into the future.

FIELD 2 LESSONS LEARNED

Government partnerships driven by individual buy-in, but still worthwhile. From its inception FIELD 2 promoted ties between DPO and government partners. Cooperating with officials had its challenges and breakthroughs during the project. The relationship with the Ministry of Roads, Transportation, Construction and Town Planning was beneficial in large part because the Ministry incentivized participation by awarding each government official who attended a credit of additional paid leave. The levels of participation this created extended to higher participation from other key stakeholder organizations, including the Professional Inspection Agency. The strong participation at the national level promoted good communication between officials and DPOs, which built trust and established common goals. This good will and direction gave greater legitimacy for collaboration in the local project areas. However, at the local level, officials rejected honoring commitments made by their predecessors, because they wanted to put their own mark on FIELD 2-related engagement. After the project team and DPO partners secured the trust and commitment of the new officials, collaboration was renewed. Future projects should not plan indicators too far in advance, especially if an event like an election can significantly impact results.

Psycho-social changes happen faster than community behavior and infrastructure. At the beginning, the FIELD 2 team and Universal Progress expected that the results from the psychological rehabilitation would not emerge for a long time. However, after only four months, the former shut-ins were bonding with each other, enjoying an extremely active social life, and advocating national agencies with great effect. By project end, four participants were employed, two had matriculated into school and all had stronger support networks for themselves and their families. The norms that drive community behavior are complex and long-term. Breaking these down and replacing established perceptions and patterns, such as the Social Model of Disability, requires un-learning the old ways and learning the new ones. Social reflexes in the non-disabled community take longer than within the disabled community because accessibility issues are not seen as "my problem." The focus on universal design and community accessibility within FIELD 2 went a long way to introduce the new thinking to the broader community. It is interesting that in nearly all the pictures of newly-built ramps,

it is “able-bodied” people who are using the ramps. With regards to infrastructure, compliance with the accessibilities takes more than good will—it requires official and private sector resources and constant monitoring by civil society and regulatory agencies. In short, it takes diligence and money—both of which are in chronic undersupply in rural areas.

Initial election advances foreshadowed what is possible, but need sustained support. The mobilization of DPOs around the 2012 elections created tangible improvements in amending the electoral code and the regulations that informed those national elections for voters across the nation. Ramps were put into place, magnifying glasses where available in most booths, home-bound voters were registered with local election commissions in record numbers, and there was robust election monitoring by PWDs. In 2012, there was direct engagement with the Chairman of the General Election Committee, Mr. Luvsanjamts, which materially improved the impact of the initiative. Unfortunately, according to official monitors of the 2013 Presidential election, these wins eroded in large part because of a change in GEC leadership and there was no financial support for similar efforts in 2013.

Government defines disability. In spite of greater community awareness of the Social Model of Disability, the government still defines what disability is, sets the value of various disabilities through the State subsidies for PWDs and their families, and maintains disincentives for PWDs to seek and secure jobs in the formal labor market by withdrawing those subsidies if employment is found. Subsidies for family members who care for PWDs are low, but the enormity of the task prevents many from seeking jobs, especially since they would then have to pay for the caregiving they provide “for free.”

Topics that are not discussed. FIELD 2, by definition, addressed the national standards for accessibility and, therefore, focused on the disabled community challenged by mobility. Almost no discussion takes place around mental health, although many increasingly point to stress and poor coping strategies as increasingly damaging to Mongolian society. In addition, few people discuss disability prevention. Fully 67 percent of those with a disability suffered an illness or accident, but had been born “able.” This is in no way to diminish the challenges that any disabled person and their families face. But a more honest dialogue about WHO is disabled and WHY, might facilitate the universal accessibility ideas that FIELD 2 promoted and advanced once a greater portion of society understands that universal access is related directly to their lives.

ANNEX 1. Number of Organizations and Individuals Involved in Project Activities

Activities	Male	Female	Total		
# people reached in the awareness raising activities	5,694	8,321	14,015		
# people attended capacity building training	796	1,204	2,000		
	Government	CSO	DPO	Private	Total
# organizations strengthened	142	45	126	149	462

ANNEX 2. Performance Monitoring Plan

(Objective 3: Voters with Disabilities was a short-term activity added in mid-implementation of the FIELD 2 project. It was not reflected in the official PMP.)

Intermediate Result	Performance Indicators	Target	Actual	Variance
FIELD 2 Project Goal: To enhance the rights of PWDs to independent living and full participation in all aspects of life.				
<i>Objective 1: Promote implementation of the 2010 accessible construction and walkways standards</i>				
IR1.1 Greater awareness and enforcement of the standards at the national level, and in 5 targeted aimags and one district.	Increased public awareness of the accessibility issues	50%	67.3%	1.35
	# of publicly available decisions and recommendations that enforce the standards by government organizations	50	56	1.12
	% increase of new building blueprints that came to consideration for state approval	10%	73.3%	7.33
IR1.2 45 newly built or renovated building and roads in Ulaanbaatar and the aimags observe the Standards for accessibility of PWDs.	# of buildings with increased accessibility index	45	82	1.82
	# of walkway crossings that were changed/built according to the Accessibility Standards	30	88	2.67
IR1.3 PWDs have improved access to public and high use buildings.	# of PWDs who can access essential buildings freely	8,000	6,000	.75
<i>Objective 2: Improve livelihood opportunities, capacities and life skills of PWDs through provision of quality Community Based Social Welfare Services in collaboration with the Provincial Departments of Labor and Social Welfare.</i>				
IR 2.1 The capacity of 18 DPOs is raised to provide better selected CBSWS for PWDs and advocate on their priority issues	% increase in organizational capacity index score for DPOs	1.5	1.3	.87
	# of targeted CBSWS initiatives that serve PWDs	30	17	.57
	# of addressed issues of PWDs to relevant organizations by DPOs	50	772	15.44
	# of people whose self-esteem is improved	240	371	1.54
IR 2.2 Income generation improved	# of PWDs reporting greater income	120	134	1.12
IR 2.3 Enhanced cooperation between PDLSW and DPOs	% of PDLSW cost share for small grant projects	50%	22.5%	.45

ANNEX 3. Round One Small Grants (2012)

	PROJECT NAME	CSO/Aimag	MC \$	PDLWS \$	DPO \$	Project total
1	Child survey	Free Trade Union for PWDs, UH aimag	1,906		485	2,391
2	We can do	Mongolian National Wheelchair Users Association, UH branch	2,869		1,461	4,330
3	Active parents with children with disabilities	Association of Parents with Disabled Children, DG branch	2,004		960	2,964
4	Power of cooperation	Association of PWDs, DG branch	1,921	769	1,172	3,862
5	Accessibility	Aivuun DPO in UB	8,122		1,650	9,772
6	My environment	Association of Parents with Disabled Children, BH branch	1,538		569	2,107
7	Capacity building of community group	Association of Parents with Disabled Children, AR branch	1,538		85	1,623
8	Sewing group	Itgeliin nud DPO in AR aimag	1,535		1,462	2,997
9	Literacy Braille Training	National Federation of the Blind of Uvs aimag	1,577		515	2,092
10	Let's survive together	Association of Parents with Disabled Children, UV branch	1,496		600	2,096
11	Infrastructure-accessible environment	Free Trade Union for PWDs, Uvs branch	1,458		250	1,708
12	New future	Association of PWDs,Uvs branch	1,582		791	2,373
13	Peer Counseling	Universal Progress, Center for Independent Living, UB	16,382	3,136	16,762	36,280
	TOTAL		43,928	3,905	26,762	74,595

ANNEX 4. Round Two Small Grants (2013)

#	Project Name & Goal	Organization name	Project funding, USD			
			MC	PDLWS	DPO	Total
1	White Gold: Improve PWDs' livelihood through supporting their business	Mongolian National Wheelchair Users Association, AR branch	1,623	566		2,189
2	Growth: Improve PWDs' livelihoods through supporting their businesses	"Shine ehlel" DPO in Arhangai aimag	1,428	2,250		3,678
3	Your Trust-Our Commitment: Establish a workplace for 7 PWDs of 2 groups in Saintsagaan soum	National Federation of the Blind of Mongolia, Dundgobi branch	1,492	460		1,953
4	Itgel Zutgel: To support independent living of PWDs and promote participation in social life; to to identify PWDs' resources and improve their business knowledge	Mongolian National Wheelchair Users Association, UH branch	1,798	450		2,248
5	Unity: To aid parents of children with disabilities through establishing sustainable income sources for them and a permanent workplace	Association of Parents with Disabled Children, BH branch	1,581	3,571		5,152
6	Power of Cooperation: Improve PWDs' livelihoods through supporting their businesses	National Federation of the Blind of Mongolia, Uvs branch	1,678	354		2,031
7	Leadership: Improve PWD's household income through identifying their resources and providing access to information and knowledge which promotes independent living of PWDs	Mongolian National Wheelchair Users Association, BH branch	1,647	457		2,104
8	Support: Establish a qualified team to operate sustainable businesses and supply high quality products to market	Equal Participation DPO, Uvs branch	1,500	300		1,800
		TOTAL	12,747	8,408		21,155

ANNEX 5: Success Stories



From Victim to Leader. It has been over 10 years since Undrakhbayar became a person with disability as a result of an accident. He could hardly imagine that he would work again, let alone lead an organization to help others with disabilities.

During this hard time, his older sister insisted he learn Japanese because she was studying to become a Japanese language teacher. She stuck Japanese characters on the ceiling and gradually he started to memorize those letters and phrases. One day, when he was in a treatment center, he had the chance to demonstrate his language skills with an elderly Japanese man who was impressed with Undrakhbayar's language skills. The gentleman provided Undrakhbayar with USD 1,000 for his treatment and invited him to visit Japan. ~~For his part~~ With this encouragement, Undrakhbayar was inspired to overcome his difficulties.

One year later he joined the Mongolian National Association of Wheelchair Users where he first became involved in Mercy Corps' USAID-funded FIELD 1 project. As Undrakhbayar participated in the FIELD Task Force, he began to think of how to establish his own NGO. He traveled to Japan, where he was introduced to the concept of independent living, which includes PWDs having access to personal assistants so they can live more independently. On his return, he founded the DPO, Universal Progress, the first independent living center in Mongolia which trains personal assistants, builds PWDs' capacity and encourages PWD participation in society. Currently, Universal Progress has 42 members and implements several projects funded by the Open Society Forum, Mongolian Association of USA Graduates, Finland Lutheran Mission, Kokorushi fund and Mercy Corps Mongolia.

Dreams Come True. Bolortsetseg was injured six years ago in an act of violence. Ever since, her family took care of her. She stayed at home all day, going outside only once or twice in a year. It seemed like a dream to her that she would ever go outside by herself and be a part of day-to-day life, just like before.

In 2012, Universal Progress reached out to her for its Peer Counseling. She quickly bloomed in the group's support and even traveled to Japan with other Universal Progress members. It was the first time she had been away from her family since her injury. Now Bolortsetseg goes out by herself to share her thoughts and concerns with other people in a similar situation. She is also employed, working as a coordinator of the Universal Progress NGO and caring for other PWDs. Bolortsetseg says that "to solve all the problems people with disabilities face, the first step is getting us to participate in daily social life and reminding others that we are here."





Shut-in, Student, Webmaster. Like most people with disabilities in Mongolia, Nergui was born “able,” but became “disabled in an accident in 2008. His brothers took care of him, but at 36 years old Nergui joined Universal Progress’ Peer Counseling project. Now he takes care of himself, enrolled in a computer and webmaster class at the National Centre of Rehabilitation and Development last September. Nergui’s family is proud that he is participating in social life as he did before his injury. To celebrate his new independence, they bought him a laptop to help him with his studies. Nergui is happy that he can test everything he learned in class on his laptop at home. Nergui says, “I’m a very lucky

person who had a chance to make my dream of having friends and a career come true through participating in the Peer Counseling project. If I didn’t participate in this project I would still be at home alone.”

In April 2012, USAID provided Mercy Corps with supplemental funding to support greater inclusion of voters with disabilities ahead of the 2012 national elections. Although brief in time, the level of enthusiastic engagement by DPO leaders and PWDs across Mongolia resulted in a doubling of voter turnout for this demographic—from 34% in 2008 to 75% in 2012.

Getting to the Polls. For many voters, physical challenges influenced their access to and secrecy of the ballot. For people with mobility issues, just getting into a polling station was a challenge. For others, including the elderly, who have visual impairments, reading and marking the ballots was a challenge. Working as a coalition, Mercy Corps supported key national DPOs to establish a partnership with General Election Committee to reduce physical barriers faced by voters. The DPO network conducted a review of 60 polling stations in Ulaanbaatar districts, and presented their findings to the GEC. The survey found that just weeks before the election, only 15% of the polling stations were accessible. The Chairman of the GEC issued an order that measures had to be taken by all polling station commissions to improve access. By election day, 85% of monitored polling stations had magnifying glasses for voters with visual impairment and 60% of UB-monitored polling stations had installed portable ramps for wheelchair users.

Voter Education Built Credibility. The DPOs and their members could not have been more enthusiastic about direct engagement in election-related activities. Mercy Corps provided a grant to the Business Incubator Center of People with Disabilities which, together with 11 national DPOs, formed a network to run the voter education activities. In total, more than 6000 PWD directly benefited from voter education trainings during June 2012. Not only were voters with disabilities reached, but able-bodied Mongolians received voter education information through these efforts as well. This enhanced role of the DPOs raised their visibility and credibility in other areas of activities following the elections, too. Finally, local leaders and communities saw DPOs not as organizations for “handicapped”, but organizations that contribute to the whole community. In February 2013, the program coordinator for the Voters With Disabilities effort, Ms. Chuulundolgor from the Mongolian Association of Wheelchair Users, was awarded the nation’s highest civilian award for her contribution to the State.