

MONGOLIA

A country where the scale of problems is small enough to be actually SOLVEABLE :



ACCA in MONGOLIA :

PROJECT CITIES (total 12)

- Erdenet
- Tunkhel Village
- Bayanchandmani District
- Khan-Uul District, Ulaanbaatar
- Dharkan
- Ovorkhangai
- Baganuur District, Ulaanbaatar
- Sukhbaatar District, Ulaanbaatar
- Bulgan District
- Baruun Urt District
- Tsenkher Mandal District
- Bayandalai District, Gobi

SMALL PROJECTS

Small projects approved : 66
 In number of cities : 12
 Total budget approved : \$187,800

BIG PROJECTS

Big projects approved : 5
 In number of cities : 5
 Total budget approved : \$150,767

SPECIAL PROJECTS

One study of alternative heating systems in the pollution-choked city of Ulaanbaatar (\$15,000).

SAVINGS (only in 12 ACCA cities)

Savings groups : 162
 Savings members : 1,770
 Total savings : 92,888

CITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

CDFs active in : 10 cities
 Total capital in 10 CDFs : \$12,400

- from ACCA \$4,000 (32%)
- from coms. \$5,120 (42%)
- from gov. \$1,438 (12%)
- from others \$1,752 (14%)

IMPLEMENTING GROUPS

The ACCA projects are being implemented by two NGOs based in Ulaanbaatar: the Urban Development Resource Center (UDRC) and the Center for Housing Rights and Development (CHRD).

ACCA is being implemented in 12 cities and districts in Mongolia so far, and is bringing new resources and new energy to the country's still-young community-driven savings and upgrading process. The program is being facilitated by two NGOs based in Ulaanbaatar - the Urban Development Resource Center (UDRC) and the Center for Human Rights and Development (CHRD). Since 2005, these organizations have been supporting the setting up of community savings and credit groups in informal "ger areas" in towns and cities around the country, with the idea of providing a financial resource within these communities that belongs to people themselves, that can pull people to work together to improve their living environments, make decisions and develop solutions to the various problems they face. The savings process has now spread to thirteen cities, with more than 1,900 savings members and collective savings of over \$46,000, and small CDFs have been established in ten cities. A country-wide network of these community savings groups came together for their first national meeting in November 2006, in the provincial city of Darkhan, and in June 2009, a national joint committee was set up to coordinate the country-wide ACCA program.

Mongolia is a country of only 2.7 million people - fewer people than are in many of the cities undertaking ACCA projects around Asia. With more than half of these people now living in informal "ger areas" in urban areas, the strategic question for ACCA has been how to link up all the different groups in the twelve cities in the program into some kind of unified force, so that the whole country's problems can be solved? Mongolia is a special country, because the scale of its problems are small enough to be actually solvable, and the ACCA program has a chance to make a significant impact in the country, rather than just starting lots of small projects which somehow don't add up to any significant change.

The ACCA program has given a big boost to the savings groups, enabling them to plan and carry out both small and big projects which answer real needs in their ger areas. The small projects showcase what people can do, and now the government officials visit the ACCA projects in ger areas. Even the president of Mongolia visited the ger areas and made a resolution to scale up the kind of people-driven ger area improvement projects he saw there. There is increasing understanding and trust between community members within communities, and between communities and their local government officials within cities. The savings groups in Mongolia remain very small and scattered, though, and the challenge now is to expand these savings groups and link them across the city into community networks that are truly city-wide in their scale and in the vision of their upgrading activities.

Coming out from behind their FENCES . . .

In Mongolia, there has been a definite "theme" for the small projects, where parks and playgrounds dramatically outnumber other kinds of small projects (41 out of 74 of the small projects implemented so far in the country are playgrounds - 55%). But these playgrounds serve an important function: they link community members and bring them out from behind their fences, utilize under-used roads and garbage dumping areas, provide space for kids to play and old folks to gather and affect much larger areas than only the savings groups who make them. In a country of fiercely independent people, who have lived for centuries as nomadic herdspeople in the isolation of vast open spaces, this is something quite important.

But besides all those playgrounds and parks, there have also been small projects to put up street lights, to build community centers, to set up operations to make fuel cells from cow-dung and sawdust, to build see-through fences, to install regular pit latrines and composting "bio-toilets" which require no water, to develop water supply systems and water kiosks, and to lay paved walkways and drainage lines and floodways in flood-prone ger areas.

