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Dear volunteers,

It is incredible that we are in March. It is amazing to see how the weather gets warmer day by day. Our operation manager Otgoo spent 2 weeks in South Africa visiting there. Hopefully we will hear lots of interesting news from South Africa when she comes back after her holiday.

March is a special month because on March 8 we celebrate Women's Day and on March 18 Men's Day is celebrated.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who wrote us the volunteer stories and allowed us to video them.

Sincerely,

Badma
Social Manager
Projects Abroad Mongolia

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day, originally called International Working Women's Day, is marked on March 8 every year. It is a major day for the global celebration of women. In different regions the focus of the celebrations ranges from general celebration of respect, appreciation and love towards women, to a celebration for women's economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.



In Mongolia International Women's Day is an official public holiday which celebrates this day within the family. Men give thanks for all women especially their mother and wife. This day all men cook in their home for women and television channels show special programs during this day.

MEN'S DAY

In Mongolia Men's & Soldiers Day is on March 18. The anniversary of military establishment is celebrated in this day and the Mongolian army majestically celebrates. Several years ago it was a day for people who have served for the military service, but nowadays it has become a day for all men. Within the family, women give thanks to men.

The abbreviated history: the day was started under Lenin to honour those in the Red Army, but once "the Fatherland" (the USSR) fell to pieces; they decided to call it "Men's Day," to balance Women's Day on March 8.



Bogd Khan Mountain & Manzshir Monastery

Lying to the south of Ulaanbaatar, Bogd Khaan Mountain has been a national park of the country for the last 300 years. The main entrance to the National Park is 46 kilometers to the south west of the city. Due to its religious significance this beautiful mountain has been untouched for centuries in terms of utilising its resources and hunting animals. A few religious ceremonies take place a year near the highest peak of Tsetsee Gun. The mountain is guarded under the special protection act of Government. With its nature and wildlife intact, Bogd Khaan Mountain boasts its beautiful scenery with green forests of pine, cedar, larch and birch covering the mountain. In summers, meadows between woods are covered with a number of different types of flowers, most of which are popular edelweiss, producing colourful scenery. A number of different species of animals including stag, wild boar, sable, wolf and fox can be found throughout the mountain.



“Manzshir” Monastery

Except from the natural beauty of Mt. Bogd National Park, Manzshir monastery is an important attraction. Built in the 19th century, the monastery was destroyed by communists in 1937 during a country wide political purge against religion. Now the sites of most temples are almost unnoticeable being covered with grass. A new temple has



been built in place of the monastery and serves as a museum. Inside the temple there are pictures and a few re mains of the original monastery displayed. Apart from them, by the ruins there are some tourist facilities including several ‘ger’-yurt accommodations, a restaurant, and a natural museum where the exhibits are made of natural items including leaves, grass, stone and feathers.

An interesting place that should be recommended is a small typical Mongolian ‘ger’ furnished with authentic Mongolian furniture. The surrounding area is perfect for walking through green woods, meadows and mountain clear water streams. Horse riding is also recommended as locals rent harnessed horses. The Manzshir monastery site is accessible through Zuunmod entrance, which is 45 kms to the south west of Ulaanbaatar.

New teaching placement:

English department of graduate school, National University of Mongolia

The National University of Mongolia (NUM) is the country's oldest and only comprehensive university and a leading centre of sciences, education and culture. It was established on October 5, 1942 in the capital city Ulaanbaatar with three faculties: Pedagogical, Medical and Veterinary Sciences. During the inception period of its history and hardship of the Second World War, the former Soviet Union had provided a degree of assistance, including sending qualified experts and academics, and supplying training materials and equipment.

NUM has played a significant role in the development of the higher education in Mongolia. In 1958 the Veterinary Faculty separated from the university to become the Agricultural University. In 1961, the Medical Faculty became the Medical University. The Technical University and the University of Humanities became independent universities in 1982.



NUM is located behind the Sukhbaatar square and Parliament House in the centre of the city. Volunteers will be working alongside a local teacher who will be introduced to them during the placement induction. As an assistant in English lessons, volunteers will concentrate predominantly on improving the conversational skills of the students. Volunteers'

presence in the school gives students the valuable opportunity to practice their English on a native/fluent speaker. Volunteers also have the freedom to make their interaction with the students as diverse and fun as they want; we recommend that volunteer come prepared with some ideas for speaking games and interesting conversation topics. As the volunteers' placement continues, depending on their ability and enthusiasm, volunteers will be given a more prominent role within the class. At the moment our volunteer Cherie Biggs is doing her teaching project there and we hope this placement will grow to be the one of our best teaching projects.

From Ulaanbaatar to the Gobi through the eyes of a Danish volunteer

by Vibeke Schmidt, Denmark, Veterinary, January – March 2011

The sun is shining, the air is fresh and I take a deep breath and immediately start coughing because a big van just gave me a nice blow of exhaust fumes. But nothing can ruin my day, I am in Mongolia, back in UB – it actually feels cool that I am able to use the slang for the capital – and I am at this moment wearing only 5 layers, which is a huge thing as I started out with 8 one month ago. I am heading towards the circus to meet up with some foreign friends and right before the Grand Plaza I can cross the roads without



any problems, which makes me smile. In Denmark everybody waits for a green light – even a 4 o'clock in the morning, so Mongolian roads are quite a challenge. Yes, I am Danish and have been in Mongolia for about 45 days and loved every second of it.

I can see the circus now, a perfect meeting spot because everybody knows how to find it. I pass a window of a shop and cast a quick glance at myself in the reflection. I can't believe that I am actually clean. That sounded weird, but I can explain. I just spend 13 days in the countryside. 9 days in the Gobi-desert and 3 days camel riding, and the bathroom facilities weren't exactly 5 star, actually they were non-existent! Countryside can be quite different from country to country. In Denmark we consider everything without trains and buses and at least one takeaway, two nightclubs and three kind of supermarkets as the countryside, but in the Mongolian countryside there is nothing. Not as in not a lot, but as in really nothing at all. But I love it! In my dear homeland, the land of the Vikings, the highest mountain is the "heaven mountain" a big, beautiful...hill at 180 m, yes meters! So the sight of the endless mountains here is like a dream come true and no matter how many times I see them they never stop taking my breath away. I went to the Gobi desert with my Mongolian colleague to spend Mongolian New Year with her family. A once in a life time chance to experience the Mongolian culture, that money can't buy. Eating thousands of dumplings (at least it felt like thousands), and agreeing to a kiss from my friends brother, a true Mongolian man with traditional black del with

golden dragons, was just a little part of my Mongolian New Year. I learned to work like a Mongolian countryside woman, to swallow my pride and serve the men, and survived 9 days without an English speaking person in sight (my friend only knew maybe 30 words in English).

After only four hours in UB I was heading west. Camel riding with my friend from New Zealand to the sand- or more like snow- dunes was the next thing on the program. Another amazing experience in the country of DJengis Khaan and even though I am now “home” in UB I am sure more weird, surprising and fantastic things will happen, because it always does in this country. One thing is sure, I think as I see my friends waiting at the circus, no matter where the future is bringing me, I’ll never forget the image of an eagle flying from the white mountainside of a valley in the Gobi-desert to the rocks at the other side, where I was sitting on the top of a mountain in the middle of the white emptiness of Mongolia.

MONGOLIA

By Andrea Huesler, Switzerland, Teaching & Human Right Project, January-April 2011

Once upon a time there was a girl who wanted to see the world. She wanted to see other countries, get to know other people and cultures and learn new languages. She was a very lucky girl; although her family was not rich, her parents agreed to send her abroad for a full year. So the girl packed her bags and said goodbye to everyone and flew away.

The girl didn't like travelling very much, and she had never before travelled so far; but after a day and a night, she finally arrived at her first destination. It was a town in Siberia, not far from the Mongolian border. Most of the people who lived in this town spoke only Russian, a language the girl did not understand. But she had good teachers, and soon she learned to love this new language.

When the girl arrived in Siberia, it had still been summer; but soon, autumn came and went, and then winter arrived. The winter in Siberia was very cold, much colder than anything the girl had ever known. But she had good, warm clothes, and she had bought a nice winter coat, so she didn't suffer too much from it.

Then, after almost half a year, it was finally time to travel on, and so the girl packed her bags and said goodbye again. This time, she travelled by train – but luck was not with her. When she came to the border, the Russians would not let her pass. So the girl had to take her bags and wait for another train and go back to ask her friends for advice. Soon, the error was found – what a stupid mistake she had made! But it was corrected quickly, and only three days later she could take another train and try again.

This time everything went well, and early the next morning she arrived in Ulanbaatar.

Mongolia was very similar to Russia in some ways, but very different in others. The weather was still cold, but there was much less snow. The streets were dirty, and there was a lot of traffic; she had to be very careful when she crossed any streets. The city was very big and confusing, and the girl got lost many times during her first week there. But after a while she always found her way again.

Her new host family was very kind, and they welcomed her very warmly. And when they celebrated the Mongolian New Year soon after the girl had arrived, they took her along on all family visits. In Mongolia, it is customary to visit as many relatives as possible, starting with the oldest ones. The girl's host family had many relatives, and as a guest she had to eat a lot of traditional food and drink milk tea. Luckily the girl liked Mongolian

food, so this was not very hard to do. But after four or five visits in a row she was very full and tired. And the next day they visited another four or five families...

However, it was not so bad; there was always somebody who spoke either English or Russian, so the girl could talk to many people. Her host family's relatives were very friendly people, and at the end of every visit they always gave her some small present. And when the girl was too tired to talk, they would just let her rest for a while.

But there was one woman who was not satisfied with her. She found out that although the girl had been in Mongolia almost two weeks already, she still could not speak a single sentence in Mongolian. She scolded the girl for it. And the girl agreed with her and was sorry and promised to find a good teacher.

The following day the girl's host father came and said his sister had told him to help her. And so he taught the girl many Mongolian words and taught her how to speak them. The girl tried very hard to learn, for she liked to learn new languages. But Mongolian was a very strange language, and it was difficult to remember all the words. That was frustrating; but the girl knew that in time, it would become easier.

Meanwhile she enjoyed this new country. The weather in Mongolia was not quite as cold as in Siberia which made walking around more comfortable. She liked the Mongolian food very much, although Mongolian tea was a little weird – with salt and milk instead of sugar. But it didn't taste as bad as she had expected. She also liked her new job, teaching English to children. At first some of the children were very shy which made teaching a little hard, but soon they got used to her. She learned a lot about the Mongolian culture, because the Mongolians have many old traditions they still follow even today. Just walking through the streets she could see many people wearing traditional clothes – something the people in her own country almost never did.

Sometimes the girl missed her family and her own country – it was strange not to be able to talk in her own language to anybody. But at the same time she enjoyed all the new experiences, all the strange things. Some of it she might even miss when she was back home again. But all in all, the girl was content. And so the time went by...

Projects Abroad

By Valancy Bailey, Australian, Human Rights Project, January-February 2011

Why Mongolia- it's the question everyone asks but no one has a clear answer too. That being said I have had one of the greatest experiences in my life there. I volunteered for a month doing a human rights placement where I worked for the Mongolian Gender Equality Centre in Ulaanbataar. The centre works with human trafficking victims and I was responsible for doing much of the work that required English. Due to the nature of the work I was not able to work one on one with victims however I was able to learn so much; I truly loved my work and know that at the centre I was appreciated.

Mongolia is a magnificent country- even at -30 Degrees Celsius. Although the winter is freezing you quickly find yourself loving wondering through the city streets. With less than a dozen volunteers there we became a tight knit group of friends who I will know for the rest of my life. These guys become the people you turn to to de-stress about work, plan weekends, have chill out sessions and become travel companions. Mongolia is a land of extremes from the high pollution and crowded roads of UB to the deserted mountains and landscapes of the countryside, everything you see and do will inspire you to embrace the place. I strongly encourage everyone to get out and see the countryside.

There is nothing like sitting in a ger house listening to the stories of your host after a long day horse riding or travelling.

Mongolia is a country steeped in traditions and history of which the locals are more than happy to share and explain to you. I was able to celebrate the Mongolian Lunar New Year there and the importance and meanings tied with the traditions of these people are fascinating and new. I spent the first part of the New Year in the countryside as it coincided with a dog sledding trip I was on with a fellow volunteer. Every day after sledding we would settle into our ger then go and visit the nomad families in the area. It was in these gers that we experienced firsthand throat singing from our hosts, and the grandeur of Mongolian hospitality. If you are able to experience a new year expect to consume masses of boaz (traditional dumplings), slices of cold lamb, fermented dairy products and to partake in plenty of toasts to the New Year. By the time I returned home to my host family I was a pro and was able to greet my family in the traditional way- much to their delight.

Despite my time in Mongolia being little more than a month I was able to get out and do a few trips. I have to highly recommend that if you are there in winter that you go dog sledding. There is nothing more incredible than sledding up a frozen river leading your team of five dogs. It truly is an awesome experience- going up the river means you are even further away from the outside world- left only with the wilds of the national park. We were especially lucky to see a wolf on the first day of New Year. The lone old male ran across the river ahead of us and we watched as he ran up into the hills.

I also went on a day trip out to the capital of the Khentii Province Ondorkhaan. Although the capital is barely more than a town we had an awesome trip and took dozens of photos - our trip there in a taxi that had 6 passengers which was definitely an experience. In my last week in the country I also went on a 3 day horse riding trip. There is truly nothing more exhilarating than riding over the open mountain tops of the Mongolian steppes. With no fences and only small groups of nomads gers nestled amongst the hills, the views are breathtaking and the tranquillity is unreal.

Back in the capital I will remember the many outings with my fellow volunteers; meals shared, swapping stories of our travels at the 1k Mongol, meeting with other foreigners doing a vast array of different things and talking with locals about the country they call home.

Mongolia is a country that you need to embrace in all that it offers. I mean where else in the world do the garbage trucks play music?!

USEFUL VOCABULARY

Hello	Sain baina uu	Сайн байна уу
Goodbye	Bayartai	Баяртай
Yes	Tiim or dza	Тийм эсвэл за
No	Ugui	Үгүй
You	Chi or ta /for older person/	Чи эсвэл та
I am	Bi	Би
We	Bid	Бид
They	Ted	Тэд
Thank you	Bayarlalaa	Баярлалаа
Sorry	Uuchlaarai	Уучлаарай
Fine /ok/good	Sain	Сайн
Bad	Muu	Муу
Nothing really	Taivan Saikhan	Тайван сайхан
How much does this cost?	Ene hed ve?	Энэ хэд вэ?
What is it?	Ene yu ve?	Энэ юу вэ?
Where is it?	Ene khan baidag ve?	Энэ хаана байдаг вэ?
Can you help me?	Nadad tuslaach	Надад туслаач
I need to call...	Bi utasдах heregte baina	Би утасдах хэрэгтэй байна
Zero	teg	тэг
One	neg	нэг
Two	khoyor	хоёр
Three	gurav	гурав
Four	duruv	дөрөв
Five	tav	тав
Six	zurgaa	зургаа
Seven	doloo	долоо
Eight	naim	найм
Nine	yus	ес
Ten	arav	арав
One hundred	zuu	зуу
One thousand	myangga	мянга
Don't know	mitgui	мэдэхгүй
Don't have	baihgui	байхгүй
Turn right	Baruun tiishee ereg	Баруун тийшээ эргэ
Turn left	Zuun tiishee ereg	зүүн тийшээ эргэ
Go straight ahead	Chigeeree yavan uu!	Чигээрээ явна уу
Stop here	End zogson uu!	Энд зогсоно уу!

Guriltai Shul – Гурилтай Шөл

A hearty soup with meat and fried noodles

Ingredients

- 150 g - Vegetables Cut into small pieces
- 1 piece - Onion Cut in strips
- 200 g - Meat or Borts Cut meat in small pieces of strips.
Soak Borts for at least 10 min in
water (the longer the better).
- 300 g Tasalsan Guril Fried noodles
- Water
- Salt Other spices at will.
- Pepper

As with any soup, the ingredients and their relative amounts can be varied at will. In the Mongolian cuisine the only constants are the presence of meat and noodles.

Preparation

- Sauté the onion strips in the pot with a little oil.
- Add the vegetables (slower cooking types first) and keep frying.
- Add the meat and fry it as well.
- Add salt, pepper, and other spices at will, and keep frying. The joint frying adds to the aroma of the soup.

- Add sufficient water, so that it will cover the noodles as well, and heat up until it boils.
- Add the fried noodles, and boil everything for about 5 minutes.
- Season to taste.

The finished soup can be refined with curds, cream, or tomato puree (although the latter is not common in the Mongolian cuisine).



Useful information

Official Facebook Group!

Check out our Facebook group: [Projects Abroad Mongolia - The Official Group](#)! It is regularly updated with photos from Social events and news on the projects and the city of Ulaanbaatar.

Official Newsletter!

Read our monthly newsletter: [The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Mongolia!](#)

Official Country Blog!

See what is going on with Projects-Abroad Mongolia! Read our [Country Blog](#).

