gerhub

uncommon solutions to common problems

Part 1

Needs Assessment of Ulaanbaatar's Ger Areas

Prepared For Lorinet Foundation

2017

Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CH-16	Chingeltei district, khoroo 16
GAIDD	Ger Area Infrastructure Development Department of Ulaanbaatar
GCMC	Ger Community Mapping Center
GER	Traditional Mongolian felt and canvas tent
GER AREA	Both Gers and detached houses
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
KHOROO	Lowest Municipal Administrative Level (sub-district)
KHASHAA	Land Plot
KHESEG	Micro District-level Administrative Division, Ulaanbaatar
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSO	National Statistical Office of Mongolia
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Executive Summary

The capital city of Ulaanbaatar has become home to almost half of the entire population of Mongolia. It is not an understatement to say that the welfare of the city directly impacts the welfare of the country. Moreover, with almost 60% of the city's population residing in a unique urban form that is referred to as the 'ger districts' or 'ger areas', it is essential to provide social, economic, and human development opportunities to the residents of these areas to ensure the welfare of the city. Understanding and identifying the needs of ger area communities will be a first step towards developing a meaningful approach to addressing their needs and beyond.

The purpose of this study has been to assess the needs of the ger area communities and stakeholder organizations by reviewing relevant literature and conducting semi-structured interviews with selected stakeholders that represented diverse professional backgrounds and types of organization. A total number of fourteen interviews were conducted with each interview averaging about one hour. The findings were analyzed from a qualitative lens.

The findings of the study include already established needs such as the need to address the lack of basic social and physical infrastructure, including heating, sewerage, kindergarten, schools, and health clinics. However, the findings also include not so widely discussed needs such as the need to strengthen communities for promoting collective action and the need for more communal spaces in the ger areas like playgrounds, community centers, and green spaces as well as the importance of employment opportunities in the formal job sector. In identifying the vulnerable groups, stakeholders and the literature unanimously agreed on women, children, elderly, people with disabilities, and rural-to-urban migrants who reside in the fringes. However, whom to target and how to approach these groups is up for discussion.

The study also tried to understand local organizations that are working to address the many needs of ger area residents. For local organizations, unsurprisingly, funding is a major issue that acts as a barrier to increasing their scope of work and impact. Surprisingly, cooperation among local organizations is weak due to the existing institutional set up, which limits their work even more. The success of the projects implemented by these organizations depends on how much they involve the community and how much they know and understand the local context.

Based on these findings and more, six recommendations have been developed. They elaborate on the following issues:

1. The importance of context and establishing real relations with the community
2. Identifying and prioritizing needs
3. Traditional organizational and financial set up and its limitations
4. Criticism of donor organizations
5. Working and engaging with vulnerable groups
6. Sustainability of programs and services

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES: MAPPING THE SPACE AND KNOW-HOW

GerHub is a newly established non-profit social enterprise that seeks to identify, research, and develop creative solutions for the challenges faced by the residents of the ger areas of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. This assessment is the first of a two-part research project for the Lorinet Foundation, and sought to map the institutions and individuals working on ger area development along with their expertise and access to resources. As laid out by Lorinet Foundation, the objectives of this research has been the following:

- Provide a nuanced understanding of the ger areas, including its administrative structure, statistical information, needs of residents, sources of problems, and drivers of the situation
- Identify vulnerable groups and biggest gaps
- Identify governmental and non-governmental stakeholders involved in addressing ger area issues and their ways of involvement.
    - Understand their biggest challenges and lessons learnt
    - Their annual program budget
- Identify potential partners for collaboration

This research is intended to help guide Lorinet Foundation as they work to achieve their mission of supporting pioneering, impactful and sustainable initiatives to promote education, employment and access to clean water and energy.

3. BACKGROUND: ULAANBAATAR CITY

Urban context

Ulaanbaatar is a post-nomadic, post-socialist city that serves as the socioeconomic, cultural, and political capital of Mongolia, generating almost 60% of the country's GDP as well as registering almost half of the country's population of 3 million[1]. Mongolia is a very young country with 64.3% being aged 35 or younger.

It has a relatively brief history of urbanization that can roughly be categorized into two main phases: 1) urbanization and modernization from 1950-90s under a single party socialist system with a centrally planned economy, and 2) urbanization from 1990 onwards under a multi-party

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[1] National Statistical Office, 2017

democratic system underpinned by principles of a free market economy (Byambadorj et al, 2011). Both of these systems and their respective policies have shaped (and continue to shape) the underlying dynamics of urban development (or the lack thereof) in the city.

Structural changes since 1990 in combination with a number of natural disasters in rural areas, followed by a burgeoning economy triggered by the mining industry contributed to the rapid urbanization process of Ulaanbaatar (World Bank, 2015; Diner and Hagen, 2013; Byambadorj et al, 2011). The number of residents in the city more than doubled from 560,000 to 1.3 million in the years between 1990-2016[2], with no significant investments made for additional social and physical infrastructure as well as housing stock. This transitioning period from a centrally planned, socialist political system to a market led, democratic system is characterized by government budget deficits, ad hoc planning as opposed to comprehensive planning, and decentralization policies that eventually resulted in the creation of two starkly contrasting urban forms in the city today: 1) planned centre, and 2) semi-formal, semi-permanent, unplanned peripheral settlements known as the 'ger districts' or 'ger areas'.

Administrative structure

Ulaanbaatar has 4 levels of government: national government (1 house, 76 elected members), city administration (45 members of which 28 are elected), district administration (25 elected members), and khoroo administration (appointed governor, paid staff, including social welfare officer and civil registration officer).

The city is made up of 9 districts (Baganuur, Bagakhangai, Bayangol, Bayanzurkh, Bayangol, Chingeltei, Khan-Uul, Nalaikh, Songino-Khairkhan, Sukhbaatar), which are divided into 152 khoroos. Ger area khoroos make up 87 of them. The ger area khoroos are further divided into khesegs.

Table 1: Administrative Breakdown of Ulaanbaatar

GOVERNMENT	DIVISION	QUANTITY	APPROX POPULATION	RESPONSIBILITY	REPRESENTATION FREQUENCY OF NEW APPOINTMENT
Capital (Ulaanbaatar)	City	1	1,380.500	Budget allocation, services, maintenance	Citizen's khural (4 years), which selects the mayor (4 years)

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[2] National Statistical Office, 2017

Duureg	District	9	153,388	Infrastructure, budget allocation of Local Development Fund (LDF) tax collection, services	2–4 representatives per duureg elected to State Great khural (4 years), duureg governor (4 years)
Khoroo	Sub-district	152	9,082	Registration, census, voting, community outreach	Citizen's khural representative (4 years); khoroo governor selected by community meeting (4 years)
Kheseg	Micro-district	ca. 8–13 per khoroo	ca. 597–970	Registration, community outreach	Kheseg leader

Source: JICA 2015 master plan, local interviews.

Updated NSO 2017

The khoroo administration is responsible for electoral roll registration, land registration, local taxation and oversee the local family clinic, kindergarten and schools. The khoroo office employs social workers for predominantly office-based administrative roles. Some khoroos employ two social workers, where one is responsible for welfare matters and the other manages population development issues. Ger area khoroo offices also employ 'kheseg leaders' as outreach workers, who are responsible for collecting and providing information as representatives of the government. Kheseg leaders are key connectors and facilitators of community actions (Terbish et al, 2016).

While the khoroo administration does not have any discretionary budget to meet local needs, it acts as an important unit of administration that communicates general needs to the district and city level.
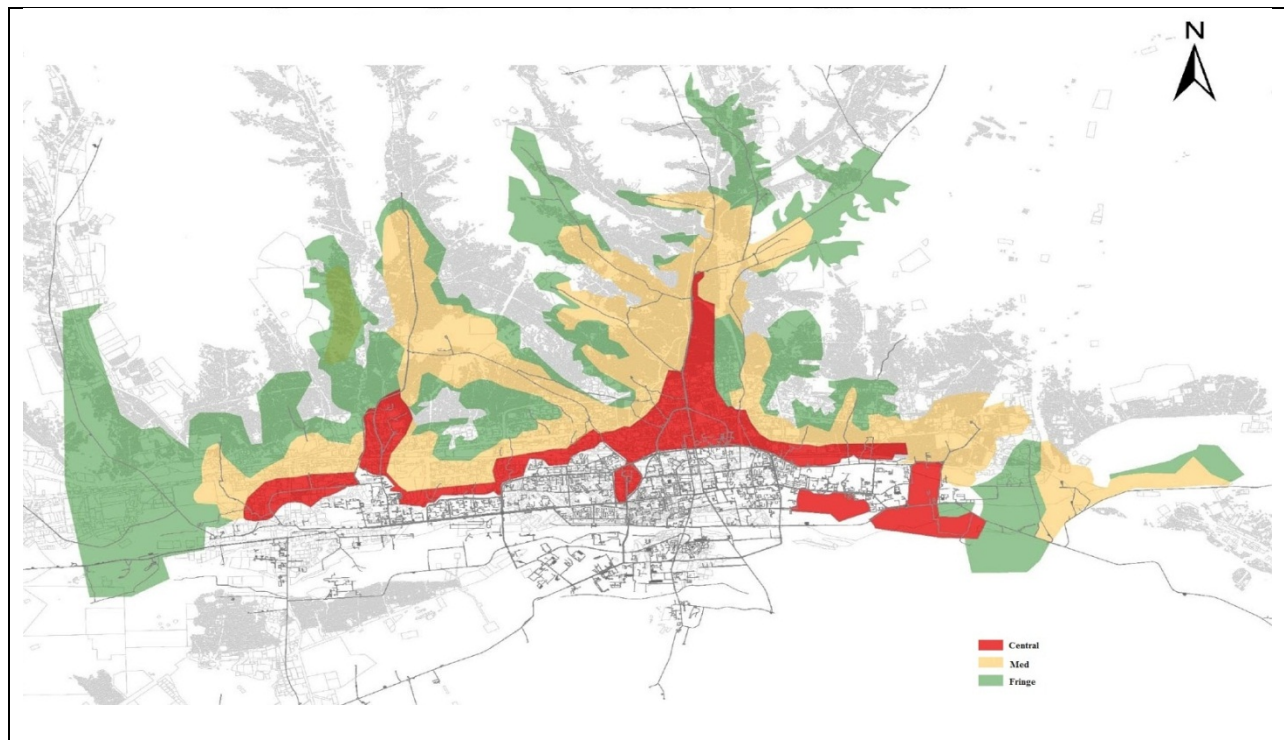
Ger areas

Ger areas are unplanned, semi-formal, semi-permanent, largely legal peripheral settlements surrounding the centrally connected areas of Ulaanbaatar. Lack of social, cultural, and economic opportunities in the rural areas, climate change induced natural disasters, lack of

sustainable pasture management, lack of affordable housing in the city, and the law on land ownership are some of the systemic factors driving the expansion of ger areas in Ulaanbaatar (World Bank, 2015; Fan et al, 2016; M.A.D, 2015). Ger areas officially register 56.7%[3] of the city's population.

By proximity to the center of the city, the ger areas are divided into three main categories: 1) central, 2) mid, and 3) fringe (Map 1).

Map 1: Typology of ger areas

Source: ger.ub.gov.mn[4]

Due to the size of the population residing in the ger areas and the expanse of the urban land it covers, the social and physical problems are diverse and context driven. However, uncontrolled, unplanned and rapid sprawling coupled with the inability to keep a pace with the provision of necessary social and physical infrastructure has created several common, multidimensional issues shared by all ger areas. They include poor living environment and lack of social and economic opportunities.

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[3] National Statistics Office, 2017
[4] Ger Area Infrastructure Development Department of Ulaanbaatar

Ger area residents largely live in two types of housing: 1) the traditional ger, 2) self-built detached housing in fenced land plots commonly referred to as khashaa plot (Picture 2).

Picture 2: Typical khashaa view

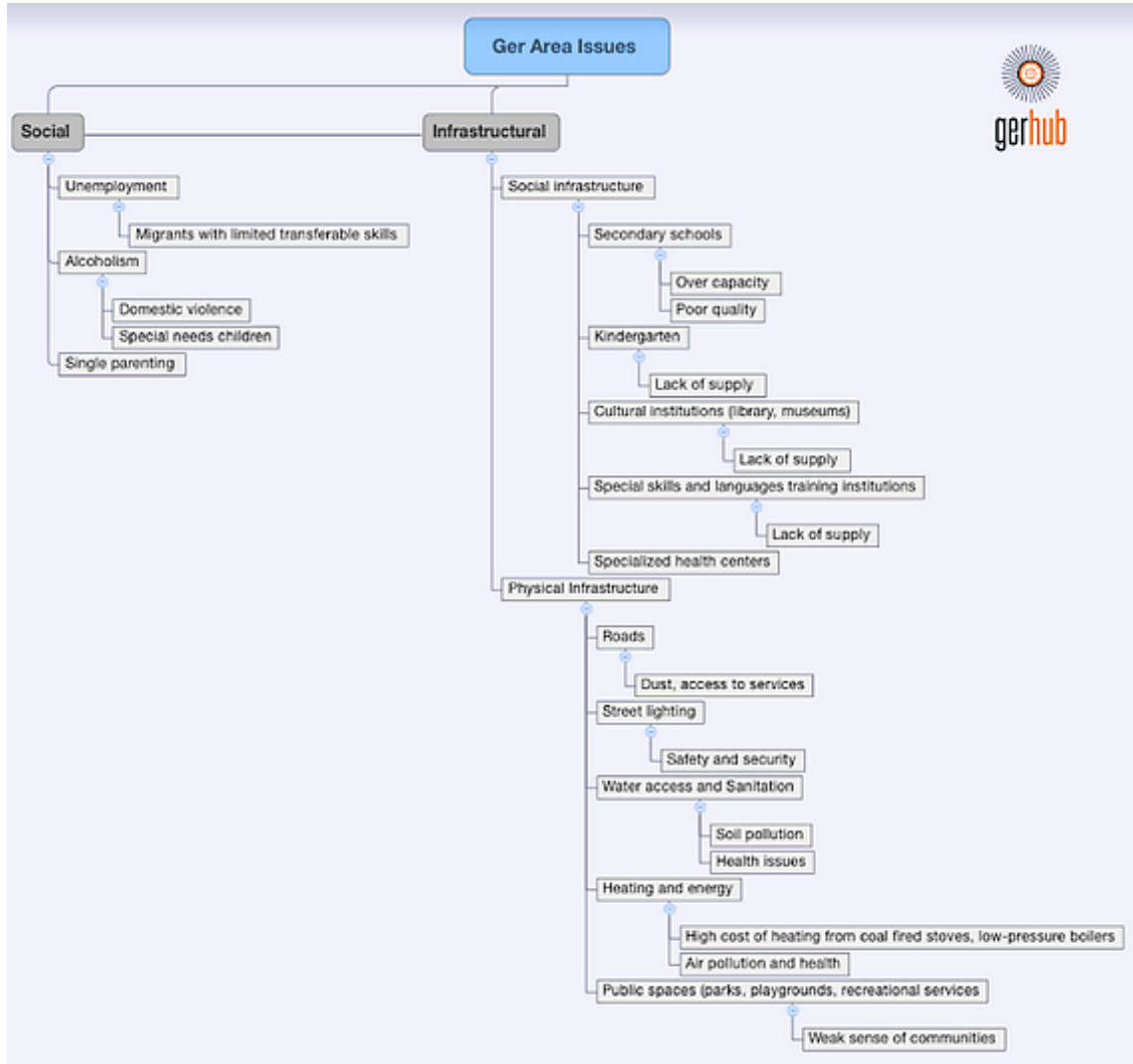<div align="right">Source: Gerhub, 2016</div>

4. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative analysis was used for this research as it provided more scope and flexibility required to better map out the topography of ger area stakeholders, their challenges, potential solutions, and resources.

Qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews, observation, and literature review of existing reports released by local and international organizations were employed. Particular focus was placed on identifying challenges based on geographic location (particular districts, khoroos, as well as central, mid, and fringe ger areas)*(Appendix 1)* and thematic areas.

Method
The main method for data collection was through conducting semi-structured interviews with selected local and international organizations and individuals who have been working in/with ger area communities. In identifying the stakeholders, we first made a "ger area issues" (Photo 1)

Photo 1: Ger Area Issues

Source: GerHub, 2017

map based on our professional experience and knowledge of the ger areas. We selected 22 key organizations that could represent different sectors to provide us with useful information on what they're currently focusing on. In selecting the organizations, we considered their years of experience, scope of work, and their general reputation in the society (Table 2).

Table 2: Participant list

No	Name of Organization	Main areas of activity	Job Position	Name of Interviewee

I	Governmental organizations			
1	Ger Area Infrastructure Development Department of Ulaanbaatar	Ger Area Infrastructure development	Specialist of Information	Mr. Tulgabat
2	Chingeltei 16th khoroo administration	Smallest administrative unit of the city	Social Worker	Ms.Tumurchudur
3	Chingeltei 16th khoroo Family Health Clinics	Healthy service	Social Worker	Ms. Erdenezaya
II	Non governmental organization			
4	Ger Community Mapping Center	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Batdorj
5	Universal Progress	Disabilities	Founder	Mr.Undrakhbayar
6	Children's Ger Center	Children Protects	Teacher, Operations manager	Ms. Sarantuya, Ms. Munkhtuya
7	Green Lake Community Garden	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Ulziitogtokh
8	Wash Action of Mongolia	Water and Sanitation	Executive director	Ms. Ts. Battseren
9	Eco Developments residents Association	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Odgerel
10	Lantuun Dohio	Children Protects	Research manager, Operations manager	Mr. Ganbayar Ms. Saruultugs
III	International Organizations			
11	Asia Foundation	Urban Governance	Deputy project manager, Project officer	Mr.Philippe Long Ms. Uelun-Ujin
12	Global Green Growth Institute	An interdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder organization that believes economic growth	Cities Program Officer	Ms. Unurtsetseg

13	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Urban Governance	National senior program coordinator	Ms. Zayasaikhan
14	Good Neighbors Mongolia	Healthy service, Increase household income, Citizens' participation	Operations manager, Children's programs officer, Water and Sanitation programs officer	Ms. Badamgarav, Ms. Bolormaa, Ms. Gerelchimeg

We purposefully did not include bilateral organizations like the World Bank and JICA as they work directly with the government. However, ADB was included in the stakeholders list as they are the largest international donor organization working with the government to improve trunk infrastructure and housing in the ger areas.

Participation
From the selected 22 organizations, a total number of 14 in depth, face-to-face interviews were either done by the researcher or the assistant researcher. Participants were contacted through email and phone calls depending on which method they use on a daily basis. For instance, khoroo administration uses phones more often than emails due to either unreliable Internet connection, or not being used to working with emails. Most participants occupy leadership positions in their respective organizations, and interviews lasted on average 1 hour.

While the participants represent key people and organizations, due to the small sample size, the conclusions made in this research should be taken as suggestive not conclusive. All interviews except for one (i.e The Asia Foundation) were done in Mongolian and transcribed in Mongolian, and then translated into English (transcriptions available upon request).

As the main aim of the research was to gather in-depth and exploratory information regarding the research topic, seeking for a number of participants that is statistically representative was not considered necessary. However, the researchers faced with instances where potential respondents either did not respond to requests or denied participation. Due to the timing of the data collection period (i.e Naadam holiday and summer holiday), staff in charge of operations at

ADRA requested to get in touch in the fall season, whereas ADB directed us to online resources for information *(Appendix 2: Full list of organizations that did not respond).*

Development of Interview Questions

Interview questions were developed based on discussion with Lorinet Foundation where themes and questions aimed to understand general ger area community needs and respective stakeholder organizations and their theory of change. Specifically, it asked questions under the following themes:

- Identifying community needs and drivers of issues
- Program and services
- Challenges of working in the ger areas
- Area organizations and government
- Funding/finance and organizational set up

Ethical and Risk Concerns

This research does not deal with ethically sensitive matters. The research aims and objectives were explained prior to the participants, where only those who agreed were approached.

5. KEY FINDINGS

Ger area and their common needs

Environmental Pollution and Infrastructure in the Ger Areas
Ger areas are challenged with a range of environmental issues, including air and soil pollution, and water safety issues. All have been induced by the lack of various infrastructural systems, and pose various acute and chronic public health threats not only to ger area residents, but the entire population of the city (World Bank, 2011, UNICEF, 2016).

Formal heating and sewerage infrastructure is currently non-existent in the ger areas, and is being individually dealt by residents. Most residents in the ger areas meet their water needs through public water kiosks that are operated by the government. While the quality of water distributed in the ger areas fulfills national standards, knowledge and practice regarding household water collection and storage methods remains a public health concern as residents continue to use unsafe collection and storage containers that may negatively impact their health in the long run (National Public Health Institute, 2017). Moreover, a social worker of a family

clinic from our study noted the increase in stomach disease among children during summer and increase in respiratory disease during the winter months (Interview with CH-16 social worker, 2017). Findings from a study by the National Health Institute correlate soil pollution to prevalence of stomach disease among children aged 0-5 (National Public Health Institute, 2017).

Lack of formal heating infrastructure has made Ulaanbaatar city one of worst, if not the worst, cities in the world in terms of air pollution, with city residents exposed to annual average concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) over seven times higher than World Health Organization (WHO) international guidelines (RW Allen et al, 2013; World Bank, 2011; S.K Guttikunda et al, 2013).

While there are various sources for air pollution in the city, it is primarily caused by coal fired heating and cooking stoves used by ger area residents during the winter months, and exacerbated by a lack of options for efficient fuel, poor building construction quality, and insufficient electricity voltage power to sustain electric heating (UNICEF, 2016). Additionally, air quality is reduced due to unpaved road networks coupled with limited public transportation service that is met by private cars. Various reports and studies have revealed and highlighted the health and economic costs of living in such conditions (UNICEF, 2016, World Bank, 2011).

Despite the lack of main infrastructural systems, various quantitative assessments and reports reveal that ger areas residents are most unsatisfied with landscape enhancement (lack of streetlights, local pathways, green space, playgrounds), organization of ger areas (incoherent addressing system), and lack of social services such as kindergarten and nearby hospitals (SDC, 2016; World Bank, 2010; Interview with Nogoolin Khoroo, 2017; Interview with GCMC, CH-16 social worker and khoroo organizer, 2017). On the contrary to many beliefs, residents seem to be fairly satisfied with the current water distribution system, and do not mention the current situation of outdoor toilets and sanitation as a major issue. Air pollution remains a priority issue across all levels with several of our interviewees emphasizing on the gravity (Interview with SDC, GCMC, CH-16 health worker, Nogoolin Khoroo, WASH Action of Mongolia, GAIDD).

Economic inequality
Mongolia experienced sustained economic growth due to a mining boom for the past 15 or so years, averaging annual growth of 8% since 2000, and in double-digits from 2011-2013. While

this growth helped reduce poverty in the country from 38.7% in 2010 to 21.6% in 2014, there is perception of rising inequality in income distribution as well as access to economic opportunities (UNDP, 2015; The Asia Foundation, 2014). Many rural-to-urban migrants who have relocated to Ulaanbaatar in pursuit of better economic opportunities face difficulty in finding good jobs due to the lack of qualified skills training, and find themselves either unemployed or forced to work in informal jobs where wages are low (The Asia Foundation, 2014).

Mongolia's labor market is characterized by shortage of skills in certain sectors, dependence on seasonal or temporary employment, gender inequalities, and specific labor market challenges for certain age groups (both the very young and people aged 40 and above) (World Bank, 2015). Contextual factors such as harsh climate with extreme differences in seasonal temperature and a sparsely located population also influence the nature of employment. One third of the economically active population in Mongolia is employed in the agriculture sector, where productivity, wages, and salaries are comparatively low. While construction sector employment accounts for only 7% of total employment, it is the most important sector for temporary and seasonal workers (World Bank, 2015).

For Ulaanbaatar, certain labor market groups are more vulnerable than others, including rural-to-urban migrants, youth, children, and women (World Bank, 2015; UNDP, 2016). Workers above the age of 40 find it difficult to be employed, especially if they have not been able to update their skills for the current labor market. Likewise, graduates from secondary schools, TVET colleges, and higher education institutes face similar difficulties. Studying, housekeeping, and childcare are cited to be some of the main reasons for inactivity (World Bank, 2015). Another frequently cited reason is not being able to find suitable work.

According to the World Bank's report, the main challenges for the Mongolian labor market are to, 1) increase labor participation of women, 2) increase the share of regular employment by reducing the temporary and seasonal employment, 3) improve job prospects for young adults, and 4) increase employment opportunities for people 45 and over.

In the ger areas, unemployment is perceived to be the most pressing issue by residents (SDC, 2016), and one that impacts various aspects of social life, including access to childcare, education and health services. Many of the participants in our study also echoed similar points, emphasizing on the need for employment opportunities, and the integral role economic stability

plays in improving people's lives (Interview with Nogoolin Khoroo, SDC, Universal Progress, Ger Children Center, Good Neighbors, CH-16 khoroo organizer and social worker, 2017)

Social disadvantage

Economic instability, insufficient provision of social and physical infrastructure, and poor living environment make ger area residents vulnerable to social exclusion and limit their equal access to various services. A number of studies focus on disadvantage among ger area residents. Migrants to Ulaanbaatar are likely to face social exclusion in relation to lack of basic social services and lack of supportive social networks resulting from migration (Terbish et al, 2016). Unemployment has been found to increase isolation and limit access to services, whereas absence of good quality educational facilities and health services in the ger areas creates a larger social gap and enables discriminatory attitudes (Mayer, 2014).

Rapid urbanization and changes in Mongolia's political and economic systems has impacted social capital, undermining community ties and cultural practices (Stol and Adiya, 2010). Strong social capital-- that is strong individual and community networks-- is associated with various positive outcomes, including reduced crime, good governance and civic participation, and improving health and wellbeing (National Emergency Management Agency of Mongolia, n.d). Dismantling of socialist institutions like pioneer organizations and youth, women's, elders', neighborhood, and professional associations coupled with rapid population growth disturbed and weakened social ties that are detrimental for individual and communal success. All participants, including in the study cited "public attitude" as a problem for working in the ger areas. CH-16 khoroo organizer noted that participation in public activities is low unless goods are being provided for free (Interview with CH-16 khoroo organizer and social worker, 2017).

Stakeholder findings: governmental vs local vs international NGOs

Due to the pressure of looming sovereign debt payments and an economic downturn, the government of Mongolia has been forced to operate under a tightened budget. A 5.5 billion (USD) bailout agreement by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was approved earlier this year in May 2017 (IMF, 2017). The bailout includes fiscal discipline measures, which will result in cuts in social welfare spending and increase in taxes. In this context, the role of local and international NGOs will play an integral role in social protection.

However, our interviews reveal that local NGOs face constant lack of financial and human resources, which limits their scope of work. This situation is worsened due to weak cooperation

between local NGOs to address societal issues. For instance, in our interview with Lantuun Dohio, the participant stated:

"Organizations here [in Mongolia] tend to "own" issues as if no one else is supposed to work on them. This makes it difficult to work with others from the beginning." (Interview with Lantuun Dohio, 2017)

With regards to vulnerable groups, all stakeholders identify women, children, fringe ger area residents, people with disabilities, and elderly as vulnerable. However, our interview with The Asia Foundation revealed that the way the government identify and determine vulnerable groups is misleading, and leaves out many people from social protection (Interview with The Asia Foundation, 2017). Moreover, many have noted the difficulty of working with people aged 40 and over as they're deemed to be inflexible in their mindset and do not respond well to changes (Interview with GCMC, WASH Action of Mongolia, SDC). In terms of community needs, stakeholders differ in their priorities depending on their scope of work and capacity. As for projects and programs being currently implemented in the ger areas, it's surprising that only two organizations, Nogoolin Khoroo and GCMC, have put community building and strengthening at the core of its theory of change.

Table 3 summarizes the findings from stakeholder interviews.

Table 3: Stakeholder interview findings

	Governmental	*Local NGO*	*International NGO*
Current context of stakeholders	• Operating under tightened budget due to sovereign debt payments and economic downturn • Decreased social welfare funding due to requirements set by IMF • Problematic governance in all levels of government	• Unstable funding and operations • Human capacity and resource issues • Little to no support from government • Cooperation between other NGOs is low • Activities are focused on delivering basic needs	• Technical assistance • Operates under respective missions • Supports governmental agencies as well as local NGOs
Ger area community needs according to	• Community needs differ according to the level of administration	• Improvement of living environment (i.e street lighting, safety, local	• Infrastructure development • Improving governance

stakeholders	• Core focus on infrastructure development in the ger areas • At the khoroo level, the focus is on social welfare, registration, and outreach	pathways, playgrounds, green spaces, school and kindergartens) • Environmental pollution (air and soil) • Women and children's health • Supporting employment and livelihoods improvement	• Supporting employment and improving livelihoods • Skills training (vocational and language skills)
Programs and services currently being implemented by stakeholders	• Redevelopment projects according to Ulaanbaatar's Master Plan 2020, Development Approaches 2030 • Social welfare programs	• Programs and projects to support and protect women and children's welfare • Programs and projects to improve livelihoods • Public awareness work on respective sector issues	• Improving government services • Baseline research • Infrastructure project financing
Challenges of working in the ger areas	• Unstable financing and structural changes • Lack of monitoring and evaluation of implemented projects • Public participation issues • Conflict of interest • Difficulty reaching fringe area population	• Public attitude and participation • Difficulty working with adults with set mindsets (often aged 40+) • Difficulty working with the very vulnerable	• Misunderstandings arising from poor communication • Managing expectations of community • Meaningful participation and finding the right approach for engaging the community
Organizational and financial set up	• n/a	• Varies depending on the organization's focus, scope, and funding • Constant lack of funding and resources related to funding unlike international organizations that are funded by large donor organizations	• Varies depending on the organization's focus, scope, and funding

Vulnerable groups	• Fringe area residents, people with disabilities, single parent households, children, elderly	• Women, children, fringe area residents, people with disabilities, single parent households, young adults	• Women, children, young adults, people with disabilities
Cooperation and partnership	• Cooperates with NGOs, government agencies, and INGOs	• Cooperates with government and INGOs • Does not cooperate well with other local NGOs	• Cooperates with governments, local NGOs and INGOs.

6. DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of context and establishing real relations with the community

Many of the stakeholders (i.e Ger Community Mapping Center, Nogoolin Khoroo NGO, WASH Action for Mongolia, and Green Lake Community Park) highlighted the importance of establishing authentic relations with the community. This involves researching and learning about the community's needs as well as their assets. As said before, the ger area communities of Ulaanbaatar are expansive, and face unique challenges depending on various factors, including their geographical context, typology (i.e central, mid, fringe), and demographic. Projects and programs need to be context sensitive in order to be successful. For instance, Nogoolin Khoroo's Odgerel referenced a case during our interview where the government built a business incubator center in the khoroo without involving the community in the process. After a couple of years of not being operational, the center is now being transformed into a kindergarten.

Recommendation: Communicate clearly timeline and outcomes early on for each project in order to set realistic expectations. There have been too many projects that have been promised but not delivered over the past 20+ years. Establishing real relations refers to showing genuine interest in the welfare of the community, which involves community participation in the project design and implementation (i.e hiring from the community). Identifying 'local heroes' and tapping into their local knowledge and resources can be useful.

Identifying and prioritizing needs

Ger area community needs have been assessed and identified by various stakeholders over the years. While lack of infrastructure such as water, sewerage, and heating are already established major deficiencies in the ger areas, some assessments reveal that from the point of view of ger area residents, their priorities may be different. For instance, landscape enhancement (green space, playground, local pathways) and social services related to employment, health, and education takes priority over water access, sanitation, and heating, whereas air pollution is an issue that everyone acknowledges as being a high priority issue.

Recommendation: *Delivering a tangible outcome initially will help establish trust and build the foundation for a close working relationship with the communities that is necessary for a sustained collaboration.*

Traditional organizational and financial set up and its limitations

The main challenge faced by local NGOs is sustainably funding its operations. Most local organizations purely rely on limited grants and donations from donors with existing presence in Mongolia. Projects are heavily donor driven and most local organizations don't have multiple sources of income. These local organizations' survival depend on their ability to find their next grant soon after their previous project ends. This circumstance forces local NGOs to be opportunistic in finding any available grant rather than setting a long term vision and coming up with new projects that they can raise funds for.

The need for an innovative and sustainable way to fundraise for operations is apparent from the number of organizations we interviewed. Moreover, local NGOs are not compelled to collaborate due to competition for limited funding from a small number of existing donors. The lack of collaboration amongst organizations leads to duplicate, less impactful projects by organizations that are working outside of their areas of specialty. The current setup of organizations limits the potential impact of organizations.

Recommendation: *Through the grant-making process, donors can build capacity within the organizations. For example, explicitly promoting submission of collaborative proposals that involve multiple organizations would help ease the competitive relationship between local NGOs. Providing sufficient administrative and overhead costs to hire additional staff and specialists will help the organization dedicate some resources to long term organizational development issues-- fundraising, strategic planning, etc.*

Criticism of donor organizations

Donor organizations have a tendency to hire mainly foreign country representatives and experts who have limited experience in Mongolia. Several organizations have noted the challenges this creates in engaging with the local context. For instance, GCMC recounted times when a donor organization had set unrealistic guidelines that were not suitable to the local context and expected unrealistic outcomes. They were compelled to take on the project due to their lack of funds. However, this relationship became too strained by the end of the project. WASH Action for Mongolia put it bluntly that projects developed by foreigners tends to fail.

Some INGOs are criticized by local organizations for acting as middlemen for donor agencies, charging a high amount of overhead costs for oversight and administration. On the other hand, most local organizations are deemed by donor organizations as not having sufficient capacity to handle big budget projects. This situation creates an environment of mistrust and mismatch between local and donor organizations.

Recommendation: *Establish respectful and meaningful partnerships that promote open discussion rather than a one-way, hierarchical relationship. Identify dedicated and trustworthy local partners and support them through long-term engagement and partnership.*

Working and engaging with vulnerable groups

As expected, vulnerable groups are identified as women, children, elderly, fringe ger area residents, people with disabilities, and single parent households by most stakeholders. However, these groups are clearly very different from each other with varying sets of needs. Adults over the age of 40 were deemed difficult to work with, whereas children and youth were the most preferable groups to target. WASH Action of Mongolia recommended working with young adults or newly married young couples that are not necessarily vulnerable, but are still at risk of falling down the economic ladder. SDC, WASH and various other organizations stressed the difficulty of working with the very vulnerable as they are often used to expecting a certain form of help (i.e charity) and does not respond well to other approaches. Past endeavours have contributed to setting perverse norms that impede social development and encourage a certain "public attitude" problem, which is referred to as one of main challenges of working with ger area communities

Recommendation: *Research more into learning about the specific needs of targeted vulnerable group to better understand and develop suitable, context sensitive approaches. Targeting children and youth may have more sustainable impact.*

Sustainability of programs and services

Organizations tend to implement short-term projects with tangible and measurable outcomes, which is understandable. Ideally, an issue is solved within a certain period of time with some type of intervention. For example, disaster relief efforts are often mobilized at a certain period of time and end when situation is under considerable control. However, various local NGOs emphasized on the importance of implementing projects that continue and benefit the community in the long run. In order to do this, local organizations need to work on becoming sustainable.

Recommendation: *Support local NGOs in becoming sustainable rather than donor dependent. Support organizations in reaching out and securing resources from global funds to unlock opportunities that currently do not exist in Mongolia. Lorinet Foundation utilizing its position as a philanthropic foundation, can rally and mobilize global (financial and non-financial) resources to take an interest in the ger area issues of Mongolia.*

7. POTENTIAL PARTNERS

GCMC

Ger Community Mapping Center specializes in using community mapping as a tool to map and visualize issues and assets of Ulaanbaatar's ger areas. The maps are used to bring awareness to the issues and are used to guide local planning and policy. They have experience working with ger area community members as well as local governmental and international organizations.

Nogoolin Khoroo

Nogoolin Khoroo community association is working to mobilize and organize khoroo 31 of Songinokhairkhan district to improve their living environment through promoting eco-housing. Their main goal is to make khoroo 31 the first model sustainable khoroo in Ulaanbaatar. Odgerel, the founder, has created a community NGO consisting members of the community. His immediate goal is to build a kindergarten as a platform to illustrate environmentally sustainable lifestyle.

Green Lake Community Park

Green Lake Community Park is a one of a kind privately owned public space located in khoroo 16 of Chingeltei district. Prior to being reclaimed from being a garbage dumpsite, it used to be a quarry mine where most of its resources were used to build central Ulaanbaatar. Ulziitogtokh, the founder, hopes to expand his operations and provide a space for extracurricular activities for children and youth living in the area.

Local Khoroo Administration

Due to their heavy workload, ger area khoroo administrations need various types of support. Capacity building of social workers, organizers, and kheseg leaders can improve government service delivery, which in turn can improve the lives of the community members. Establishing amiable relationship with the khoroo administration can be useful.

SDC

The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation is one of the most prominent donor organizations operating in Mongolia. As a Swiss governmental agency, it works with the government as well as local organizations. Working in tandem and supporting their larger projects could increase impact and allow resources to be shared.

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9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Demographic information of Ulaanbaatar's districts

Appendix 2: Full list of Stakeholders

Appendix 3: Interview guideline

Appendix 4: Interview locations

Appendix 1: Demographic information of Ulaanbaatar's district

Contents

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DUUREG	District-Level Administrative Division, Ulaanbaatar
GER	Traditional Mongolian felt and canvas tent
GER AREA	Both Gers and detached houses
KHOROO	Lowest Municipal Administrative Level (sub-district)
KHASHAA	Land Plot
KHESEG	Micro District-level Administrative Division, Ulaanbaatar
NSO	National Statistical Office of Mongolia

OVERVIEW

The *Ger Areas* are home to approximately 736,000 residents, 56.7% of Ulaanbaatar's population (NSO, 2017). The central 6 districts (Bayanzurkh, Sukhbaatar, Chingeltei, Songinokhairkhan, Khan-Uul, Bayangol) make up the heart of the city with the remote 3 districts (Nalaikh, Bagakhangai, Baganuur) located 45 to 110 kilometers from the city center.

Table 1. Registered and temporary district population

№	Districts	Number of Households	Population
1	Baganuur	8.600	28.973
2	Bagakhangai	1.200	4.131
3	Bayangol	58.200	214.278
4	Bayanzurkh	93.700	320.852
5	Nalaikh	10.400	36.425
6	Songinokhairkhan	84.900	315.802
7	Sukhbaatar	38.000	136.569
8	Khan-Uul	45.200	159.465
9	Chingeltei	40.600	158.014
	Ulaanbaatar	**380.800**	**1.380792**

Source: Statistics Department of Ulaanbaatar, 2017

A total number of 25,196 people officially migrated to Ulaanbaatar city in 2016 with Bayanzurkh and Songinokhairkhan absorbing the most number of migrants.

Infographic 1. Districts where rural-to-urban migrants settled

Baganuur	Bagakhangai	Bayangol
1%	1%	14%
Bayanzurkh	**Nalaikh**	**Songinokhairkhan**
25%	2%	26%
Sukhbaatar	**Khan-Uul**	**Chingeltei**
10%	8%	14%

ULAANBAATAR

Ger Area   Apartment Area

58.1%   41.9%
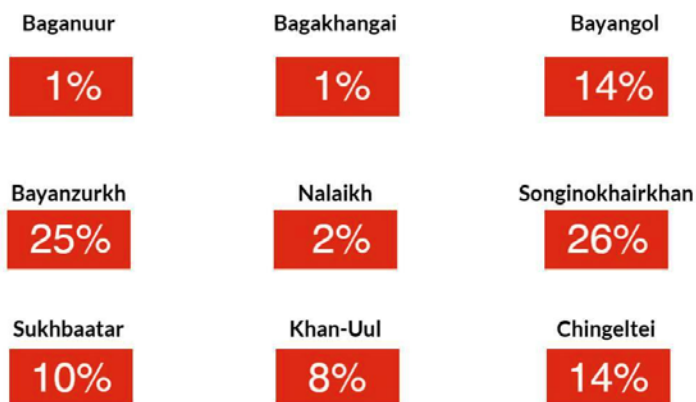
Table 2. Residents living in Apartments vs Ger Area housing by percentage

№	Districts	Ger Area	Apartment Area
1	Baganuur	59.1%	40.9%
2	Bagakhangai	43.7%	56.3%
3	Bayangol	21.6%	78.4%
4	Bayanzurkh	59.1%	40.9%
5	Nalaikh	58.7%	41.3%
6	Songinokhairkhan	75.9%	24.1%
7	Sukhbaatar	54%	46%
8	Khan-Uul	50.1%	49.9%
9	Chingeltei	80.2%	19.8%

Source: Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Center, 2017

Ulaanbaatar is a young city where 64.3% of the total population is under the age of 35. For instance: 423,224 or 30.7% are children aged between 0-15, 871,818 or 63.1% are between the ages of 16-59, 85,750 or 6.2% are over the age of 60.

30.7% 0-15 years

63.1% 16-59 years

6.2% 60 < years

64,3% up to 35 year
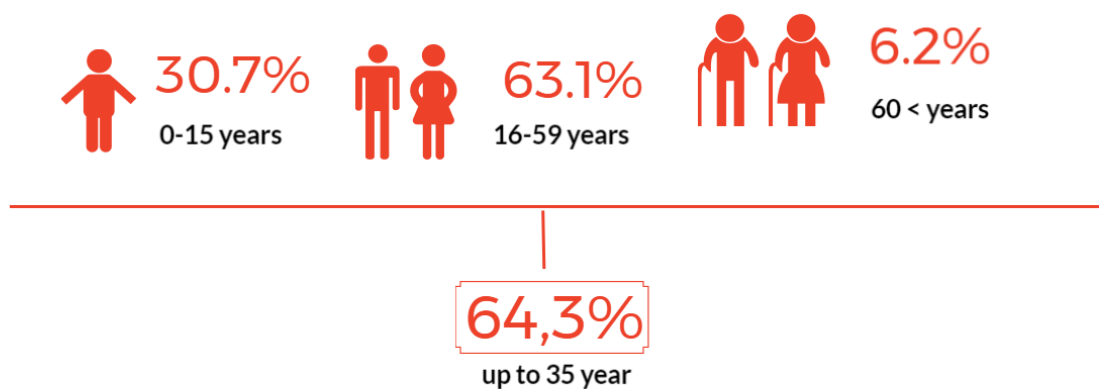
Source: National Statistical Office of Mongolia.2017

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, REASONS

According to official statistics, as of 1 January 2017, 0.7% of the population (about 33,700 citizens) has disabilities.

Infographic 3. Disabilities population, by reason

Normal Accidents	Congenital Disability	Occupational Discease
43%	40%	7%

Industry Accidents	Traffic Accidents	Households Accidents
5%	3%	2%

Source: NSO, 2017

Problems to Solutions

Increase access to schools and kindergartens	Removing waste products	Improve street lighting
Increase playground space for children and create a safe playground for children	Creating green living areas and cleaning air	Improve and repair the road
Increase day-care training center	Improve safe environment and improve sanitation services	Intensify redevelopment of ger areas

Source: Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Center, 2017

According to the report on the economic competitiveness of Ulaanbaatar's districts released in 2017 by the Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Center, the abovementioned issues pervade all districts of Ulaanbaatar, including ger areas.

General Information on Ulaanbaatar's Districts

Unemployment data below is for those who have officially registered as unemployed. Real numbers are expected to be higher.
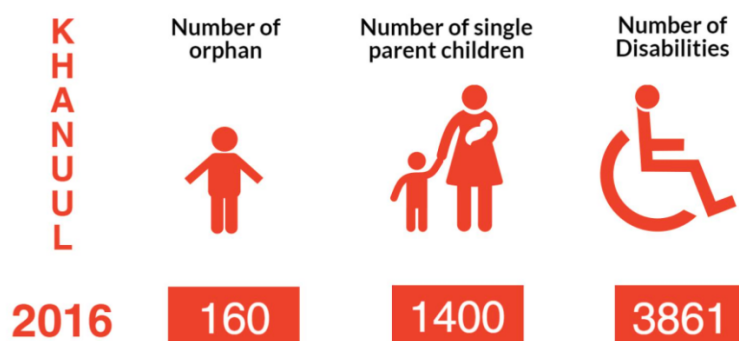
KHAN-UUL DISTRICT

Khan-Uul is divided into 16 khoroos. Khan Uul District was called the Workers District with many textile and animal product processing factories. Khan Uul is often referred to as the industrial district and is still the largest manufacturing region in Ulaanbaatar.

Large companies operating in Khan Uul include the Gobi Cashmere and MIAT. Khan Uul industries produce 100% of yarn and red bricks in the city, 85% of washed wool, 84% of felt, 70% of dehaired wool, 72% of soft drinks and beer, and 53% of bread and confectionary items (Rapid Needs Assessment of Ulaanbaatar, 2006).

Table 3. Main indicators of population

Year	Residents	Economically active population	Of which	
			Employed	Unemployed
2016	159,465	61,245	55,488	5,757

Infographic 5. Number of orphan and single parent children

Source: Statistics Office of Khan-Uul. 2017

BAYANGOL DISTRICT

Bayangol is divided into 23 khoroos. There are three main ger areas in Bayangol: the TV station area, Gandan, and Sonsgolon. In the Ulaanbaatar City Development Plan for 2020, Bayangol District has set the objective to become a "Ger Free Zone" except for Gandan. Gandan is planned to house a small Ger Area to display traditional ger life to tourists.

Table 4. Main indicators of population

Year	Residents	Economically active population	Of which	
			Employed	Unemployed
2016	214,278	133,683	72,082	10,674

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Number of orphan

Number of single parent children

Number of Disabilities

2016

149

887

4693
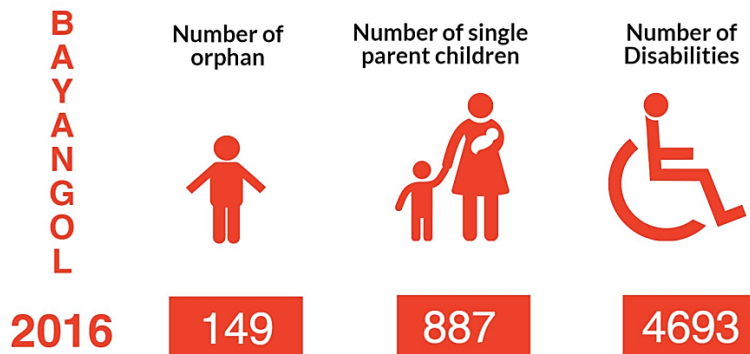
Source: Statistics Office of Bayangol, 2017

BAYANZURKH DISTRICT

Bayanzurkh is divided into 26 khoroos, and it has one of the largest ger areas. SMEs and microenterprises are prevalent throughout the district with large markets such as Narantuul and Da Khuree located in the district. The Bayanzurkh Ger Area population grew 0.6% from 2014 to 2016. It is estimated that both the apartment area and ger area populations are higher than reported.

Table 5. Main indicators of population

Year	Residents	Economically active population	Of which	
			Employed	Unemployed
2016	214,278	133,683	125,044	7,732

Infographic 7. Number of orphan and single parent children

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Number of orphan

Number of single parent children

Number of Disabilities

2016

402

5104

7794
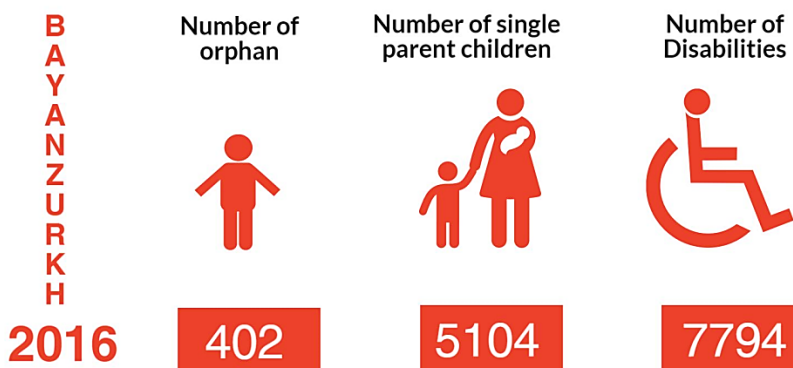
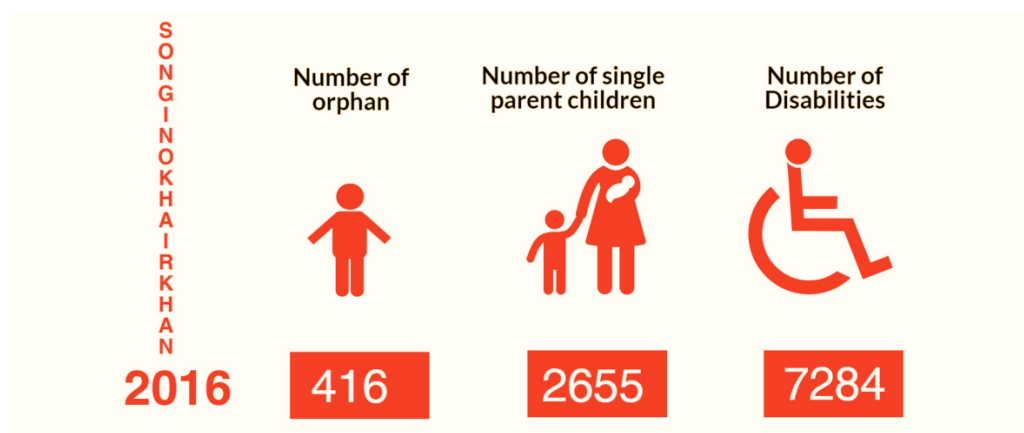Source: Statistics Office of Bayanzurkh. 2017

SONGINOKHAIRKHAN DISTRICT

Songinokhairkhan is divided into 32 khoroos. It has the largest ger area in the city. Due to this, air pollution levels are the worst. The Ger Area population may be understated due to the unknown number of unregistered residents.

Table 2. Main indicators of population

| Year | Residents | Economically active population | Of which | |
			Employed	Unemployed
2016	315,802	115,186	104,512	10,674

Infographic 8. Number of orphan and single parent children

	Number of orphan	Number of single parent children	Number of Disabilities
2016	416	2655	7284

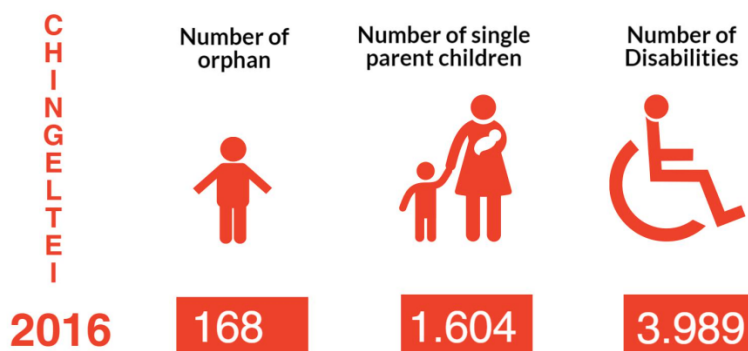*Source: Statistics Office of Songinokhairkhan. 2017*

CHINGELTEI DISTRICT

Chingeltei is divided into 19 khoroos. The district has a population of 158,014. Located in the heart of the city, the central part of Chingeltei District contains the majority of the government, financial, legal, communication, and nongovernmental offices and businesses. There are relatively few small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the district.

Table 7. Main indicators of population

| Year | Residents | Economically active population | Of which | |
			Employed	Unemployed
2016	158,014	56,197	44,355	7,509

CHINGELTEI

| Number of orphan	Number of single parent children	Number of Disabilities
168	1.604	3.989

2016

SUKHBAATAR DISTRICT

Sukhbaatar is divided into 23 Khoroos. Sukhbaatar District shares the heart of the city with Chingeltei District. Sukhbaatar District houses many national Mongolian Government offices, international organization headquarters and cultural centers. There are also 33 universities in the District including the National University of Mongolia and Mongolian University of Science and Technology.

Table 8. Main indicators of population

Year	Residents	Economically active population	Of which	
			Employed	Unemployed
2016	136,569	44,689	40,530	4,159

Infographic 10. Number of orphan and single parent children

SUKHBAATAR

Number of orphan	Number of single parent children	Number of Disabilities
154	1.285	3.181
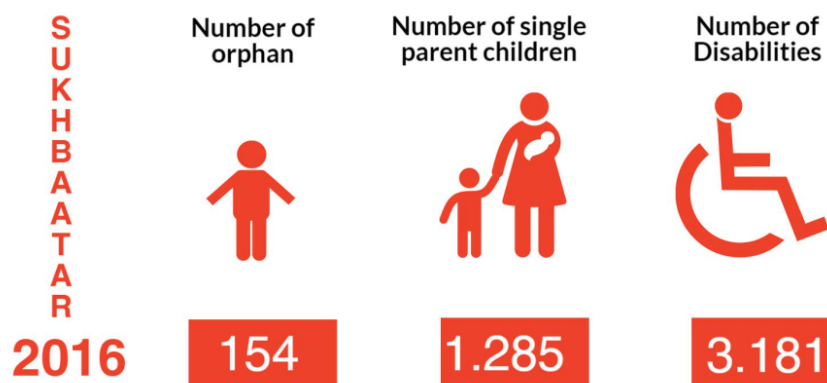
2016

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6. Statistic Office of Khan-Uul. 2017
7. Statistic Office of Bayangol, 2017
8. Statistic Office of Bayanzurkh 2017
9. Statistic Office of Songionokhairkhan. 2017
10. Statistic Office of Chingeltei, 2017
11. Statistic Office of Sukhbaatar, 2017
12. www.1212.mn
13. http://www.nso.mn/
14. http://www.ubstat.mn/Report

Appendix 2: Full list of Stakeholders

GERHUB – NEEDS OF ASSESSMENT GER AREA INTERVIEW LIST

No	Types of organizations	Main areas of activity	Job Position	Name
I	*Governments' organizations*			
1	Ger Area Infrastructure Development Department of Ulaanbaatar	Ger Area Infrastructure	Specialist of Information	Mr. Tulgabat
2	Chingeltei 16th khoroo administration	Smallest administrative unit of the city	Social Worker	Ms.Tumurchudur
3	Chingeltei 16th khoroo Family Health Clinics	Healthy service	Social Worker	Ms. Erdenezaya
II	*Non governments' organization*			
4	Ger Community Mapping Center	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Batdorj
5	Universal Progress	Disabilities	Founder	Mr.Undrakhbayar
6	Children's Ger Center	Children Protects	Teacher, Operations manager	Ms. Sarantuya, Ms. Munkhtuya
7	Green Lake Community Garden	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Ulziitogtokh
8	Wash Action of Mongolia	Water and Sanitation	Executive director	Ms. Ts. Battseren
9	Eco Developments residents Association	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Odgerel
10	Lantuun Dohio	Children Protects	Research manager, Operations manager	Mr. Ganbayar Ms. Saruultugs
III	*International Organizations*			
11	Asia Foundation	Urban Governance	Deputy project manager, Project officer	Mr.Philippe Long Ms. Uelun-Ujin
12	Global Green Growth Institute	An interdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder organization that believes economic growth	Cities Program Officer	Ms. Unurtsetseg
13	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Urban Governance	National senior program coordinator	Ms. Zayasaikhan
14	Good Neighbors Mongolia	Healthy service , Increase household income, Citizens' participation	Operations manager, Children's programs officer, Water and Sanitation programs officer	Ms. Badamgarav, Ms. Bolormaa, Ms. Gerelchimeg

GERHUB – NEEDS OF ASSESSMENT GER AREA (FULL LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS)

No	Types of organizations	Main areas of activity	Job Position	Name	Responded or Declined
I	Governments' organizations				
1	Ger Area Infrastructure Development Department of Ulaanbaatar	Ger Area Infrastructure	Specialist of Information	Mr. Tulgabat	Responded
2	Chingeltei 16th khoroo administration	Smallest administrative unit of the city	Social Worker	Ms.Tumurchudur	Responded
3	Chingeltei 16th khoroo Family Health Clinics	Healthy service	Social Worker	Ms. Erdenezaya	Responded
4	School 72	Education	Social Worker	Ms. Emdorom	Declined
5	Kindergarten 243	Primary Education	Social Worker	Ms. Maitsetseg	Declined
6	Enerel Hospital	Vulnerable groups health service	Social Worker	-	Did not respond
II	Non governments' organization				
7	Ger Community Mapping Center	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Batdorj	Responded
8	Universal Progress	Disabilities	Founder	Mr.Undrakhbayar	Responded
9	Children's Ger Center	Children Protects	Teacher, Operations manager	Ms. Sarantuya, Ms. Munkhtuya	Responded
10	Green Lake Community Garden	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Ulziitogtokh	Responded
11	Wash Action of Mongolia	Water and Sanitation	Executive director	Ms. Ts. Battseren	Responded
12	Eco Developments residents Association	Citizens' participation	Founder	Mr. Odgerel	Responded
13	Lantuun Dohio	Children Protects	Research manager, Operations manager	Mr. Ganbayar Ms. Saruultugs	Responded
14	Flourishing Future	Children Protects	Operation Manager	-	Declined
15	Development Solutions/Youth Business Initiative	Social entrepreneurship, develop business capacity	Program Officer	-	Did not respond
III	International Organizations				
16	Asia Foundation (AF)	Urban Governance	Deputy project manager,	Mr.Philippe Long Ms. Uelun-Ujin	Responded

			Project officer		
17	Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)	An interdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder organization that believes economic growth	Cities Program Officer	Ms. Unurtsetseg	Responded
18	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	Urban Governance	National senior program coordinator	Ms. Zayasaikhan	Responded
19	Good Neighbors Mongolia	Healthy service , Increase household income, Citizens' participation	Operations manager, Children's programs officer, Water and Sanitation programs officer	Ms. Badamgarav, Ms. Bolormaa, Ms. Gerelchimeg	Responded
20	World Vision of Mongolia (WV)	Increase household income	Program Officer	-	Declined
21	Adventist Development and Relief Agency of Mongolia (ADRA)	Increase household income	Program Officer	-	Declined
22	Asian Development Bank (ADB)	-	-	-	Did not respond

PS:

Responded to GerHub: 14

Did not respond to GerHub: 3

Declined to GerHub: 5

Appendix 3: Interview guideline

Interview guideline for key stakeholders working in the ger areas community

Organization name: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

Field of expertise (Ex: Education, Livelihoods, Health, Environment): _____

Target geographical location of project/programs: _____
_____

Job position: _____

Phone number: _____ Email: _____

Identifying community needs and drivers

1. What specific community need would you identify in your field of expertise, or in general?
2. Which groups do you think needs the most attention in your field of expertise?
3. What would you say are the main drivers, or is the source of the challenges the community faces?

Program and services

4. What challenges/problems are you tackling with your work and what is the solution your organization is providing (theory of change)?
5. What projects and programs are you currently implementing in the ger areas?
6. What programs and services do you think are needed in the community both presently and in the future? And what are your plans for the next 3 years?
7. Do you feel people in the community are aware of the programs and services that take place in the community, and if not, do you have any ideas on how to make them more aware?
8. Which projects and programs do you think are important to the community you target, and why?

Challenges of working in the ger areas

9. What challenges do you face in working with your community?
   - Which projects/components worked best and what didn't? Lessons learnt?
10. What challenges do you face in developing and implementing projects/programs in the community?
11. What type of support is needed the most in developing and implementing projects/programs?
12. What challenges do you face as an organization?
    - Funding? Human capacity and capital? Finding suitable solutions?
    - Do you think there are enough organizations providing similar services in your field of expertise?

Area organizations and government

13. What other organizations are providing similar services in your field of expertise to help the community?

14. In what ways do you partner with other organizations?
15. What type of collaboration would benefit your organization and help to increase your impact?
16. Do you work with the (local) government and if so how and in what area? What are the most important governmental bodies for your work?

Funding/Finance and Organizational set up
17. What is your total annual budget and annual budgets for the different programs?
18. What is your main source for funding?
19. How many people do you have working for your programs? What is the organizational set up?
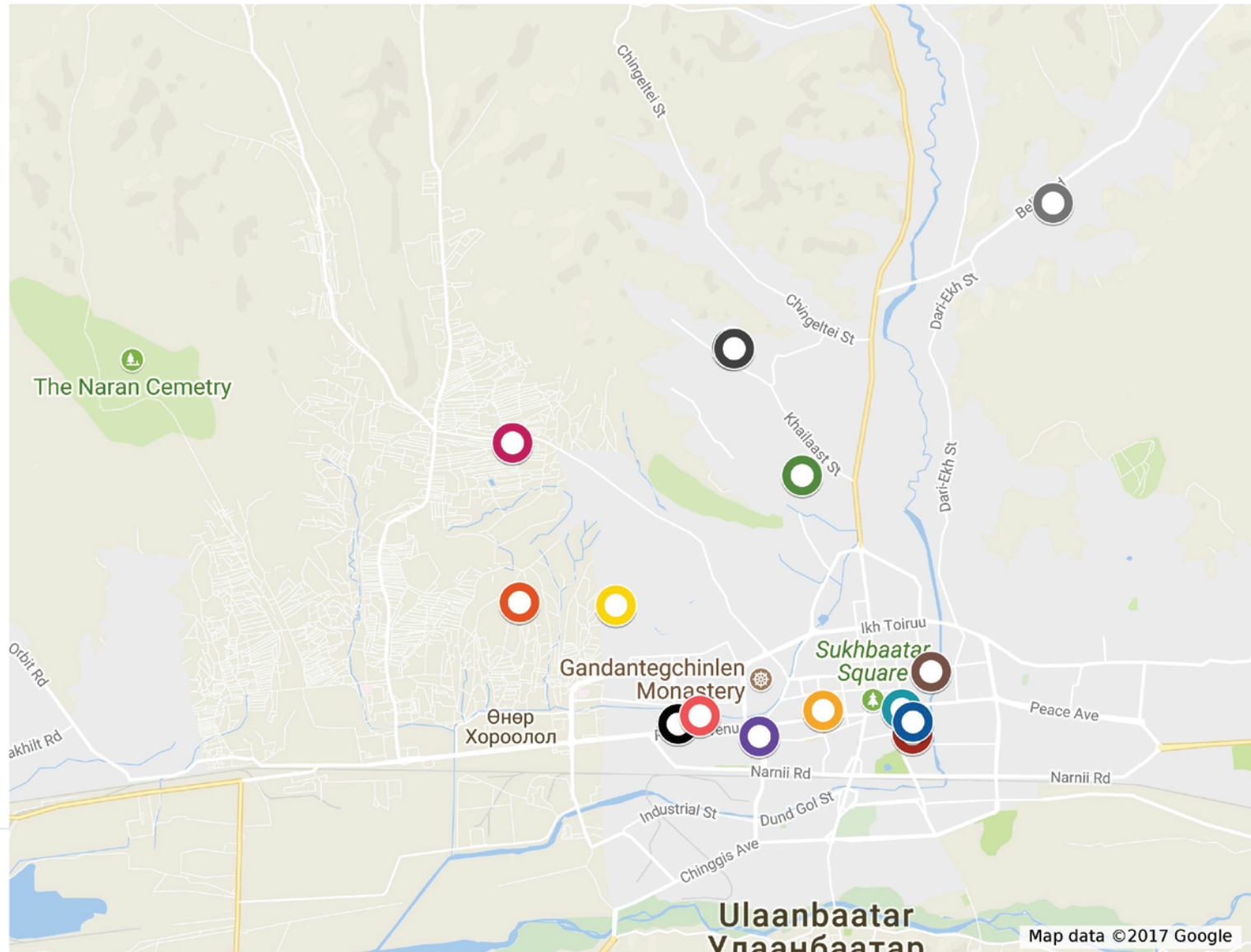
Interview locations

Study participants

- 🟡 Lantuun Dohio project site
- 🟠 Nogoolin khoroo
- 🔵 Lantuun Dohio NGO
- 🔴 Huuhdiin Ger Tuv
- 🟣 Good Neighbors Mongolia
- 🟢 Green Lake Community Park
- 🔴 SDC
- ⚪ Ger Community Mapping Center
- ⚫ GGGI
- 🟢 Chingeltei 16 khoroo
- 🟠 Wash Action of Mongolia
- ⚫ Local Clinic of Chingeltei 16
- 🔵 The Asia Foundation
- 🟤 Ger Area Infrastructure Dev. Dep
- 🔴 Universal Progress

The locations do not accurately represent target areas of activities. Organizations like Good Neighbors, SDC, The Asia Foundation have expansive networks.