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**LEAD** MONGOLIA  
Leaders Advancing Democracy

**IMPACT REPORT**  
2016-2018



*This impact report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United State Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of World Learning and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.*



Welcome to the Leaders Advancing Democracy (LEAD) Mongolia 2016-2018 Impact Report. The World Learning team is proud to provide you with this overview of LEAD program activities as well as our impact to date.

World Learning launched LEAD in September 2016 and since that time we have formed many partnerships and worked with some of Mongolia's best and brightest young leaders. Our unique fellowship is unleashing the leadership potential of Mongolia's young democracy advocates; the LEAD Alliance is building networks with other young leaders in Asia; and LEAD is also encouraging thousands of high schoolers across the country to engage in civic life.

We hope you can find some time to get involved - check out our opportunities at the end of this report - or to support one of the very many important LEAD initiatives.

World Learning is an international nonprofit organization empowering people and strengthening institutions through education, sustainable development, and exchange programs in more than 60 countries. For 85 years, World Learning has worked to create a more peaceful and just world, and we have operated in Mongolia since 2002. LEAD Mongolia is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

# What is LEAD?

Leaders Advancing Democracy (LEAD) Mongolia is a five-year initiative designed to build the country's next generation of democracy champions through a variety of leadership opportunities, international exchanges, and civic education. This is achieved through three intersecting activities:



**LEAD Mongolia** is an intensive fellowship program for up to 227 young Mongolian leaders from a variety of sectors to come together to network and confront challenges through positive impact projects.



**LEAD Alliance** connects Mongolian emerging leaders with like-minded peers in Asia and positions them as regional leaders. It is an opportunity to showcase Mongolia's story of peaceful democratic transition.

Partner: International Republican Institute (IRI) in Mongolia



**Civic Education for High School Students** encourages young people to get involved in civic life. This includes sponsored competitions in which students take action to improve their schools and communities.

Partner: Mongolian NGO, the Center for Citizenship Education (CCE)





## Why LEAD?

Mongolia has served as a model of peaceful and successful democratic transition for 28 years. However, its younger generation has increasingly been marginalized from civic and political processes and disengaged from elections. This poses a threat to Mongolia's democracy, particularly as young people (aged 15-34 years old) comprise more than one third of the country's population.

Faced with rising unemployment, corruption, and fast-growing discontent with their country's political climate, Mongolia's emerging young leaders are increasingly less optimistic and less likely to engage in civic or community work to combat these challenges. In response, **LEAD supports the development of the next generation of change agents whose leadership will combat civic indifference, revive optimism, and help forge a common vision for the successful democratic trajectory of both Mongolia and the region.**

## LEAD Mongolia

LEAD Mongolia is an intensive fellowship designed for the next generation of democratic champions and involves leadership opportunities, international exchanges, and implementation of projects to improve their communities. The LEAD Mongolia fellowship is open to applicants between the ages of 25 and 40 who can articulate a unique vision for positive democratic development in Mongolia.

Over the five-year period, LEAD Mongolia will bring together 227 emerging leaders, known as LEAD Mongolia Fellows. Of these fellows, 137 will take part in our U.S. exchange program while 90 Fellows

will remain in Mongolia to take part the in-country thematic program.

LEAD Mongolia Fellows represent a uniquely diverse cross-section of viewpoints, experiences, and professions.

LEAD is providing a compelling model where leaders come together from different backgrounds to forge a cross-sectoral force for inclusive change. Together, LEAD Mongolia Fellows plan and implement projects on issues important to them related to three policy themes:

- Poverty and unemployment
- Environment and urbanization
- Transparency and anti-corruption.



### LEAD Mongolia by numbers to date

97

Mongolian Fellows representing UB and 18 provinces

11

positive impact projects implemented by fellows as part of program

26

partner organizations involved in LEAD Fellows' activities

3,734

direct beneficiaries of our LEAD Fellows' projects

1,384,276

people reached through advocacy or public awareness campaigns

Since 2016, World Learning has hosted two **LEAD U.S. Exchange Programs**, which include an intensive academic program at the University of Virginia (UVA) Center for Politics as well as World Learning headquarters in Washington, D.C. Through our **In-Country Thematic Program**, 30 fellows to date have taken part in an intensive skills retreat and experiential thematic experience all in Mongolia. In both programs, fellows learn about advocacy and community mobilization, conflict resolution, and project design and implementation.



To date, 100 percent of program alumni report that their new LEAD connections and networks help them effect change - a positive indicator of LEAD's premise that the seeds of democratic advancement take root when young emerging changemakers are brought together. Another 97 percent of fellows report their LEAD experiences have increased their appreciation for democratic governance and provided them critical skills to play a role in strengthening Mongolia's democracy.



“Above all, I learned how to work with diverse people. The best practical skill of the LEAD Mongolia program was having participants from different careers, backgrounds, religions, religious beliefs, genders, ages, ethnicity, physical abilities, socio-economic status, and organizations come together under one goal.” - Temulin Batjargal, LEAD Mongolia Fellow

By the end of the program, we hope to see a substantive network of 227 of Mongolia's most promising leaders, who are connected and ready to take on tough challenges. LEAD Mongolia Fellows will possess the knowledge and skills to advance public policy, pursue positive change, and engage other Mongolian citizens to address the most pressing community needs.

## PROJECT PROFILE

“We wanted to raise our voice against corruption. We hope to make aware not only kids, but also parents since they directly influence their children's behavior.” - Student participant

**Transparency through the Eyes of Youth is one of the 11 projects LEAD Mongolia Fellows have implemented since the program's inception.**

Lack of transparency and increasing corruption threaten to erode citizens' trust in governance and faith in Mongolia's democratic transition. Mongolia scored only 36 of 100 points on the 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International and ranked 103 among 180 countries (180 being the most corrupt), which is well below the regional average. In fact, Mongolia fell 16 places from its rank on the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index - an evident setback in a country struggling to root out years of corruptive practices.

The LEAD Mongolia Transparency & Anti-Corruption (TAC) team

argues that most Mongolian citizens have come to accept corruption as part of their everyday lives and have no idea how to address it. Consequently, young people become less enthusiastic and less likely to engage on the social and policy issues important to them.

But this team of 11 LEAD Fellows has an idea about how to change all that. Beginning in late 2017, the TAC team launched *Transparency through the Eyes of Youth* project to spur awareness among youth about what transparency is, why they should care about it, and what they can do to combat corruption. “We have to start with young people,” says TAC team leader and attorney Munkhjargal Munkhbat. “But there is no high school level education about transparency. People think the only way to decrease corruption is to punish officials who take bribes.”



*Transparency through the Eyes of Youth* brought high school and university students into the development of vital transparency and anti-corruption curriculum. Through a series of student-led competitions involving up to 30 schools, TAC received 36 youth-made videos that both inform and empower young people to act against everyday corruption. These videos have been viewed online by more than 325,000 people to date and touch upon the impact of petty corruption in health, education, and other sectors. The TAC team worked with students and teachers to transform these video submissions into easy-to-teach, video-based curriculum which has been shared with 778 high schools in all 21 provinces of Mongolia. The result is innovative, engaging materials that are inspired by youth and ready for teachers to use.

# LEAD Alliance: Regional Network of Emerging Leaders

The LEAD Alliance is dedicated to realizing Mongolia's potential! We connect LEAD Mongolia Fellows with like-minded emerging leaders from Kyrgyzstan, Bhutan, and Myanmar through a wide variety of activities designed to engage, inspire, and ignite a passion for positive change.

These connections bring young democracy champions from Mongolia and three partner countries to create an emerging leaders alliance, or LEAD Alliance. Each year we select 15 participants, ages 25 to 40 - five each from Kyrgyzstan, Bhutan, and Myanmar - to join the Alliance as LEAD Alliance Fellows.



## LEAD Alliance by numbers to date

35

LEAD Alliance Fellows from three countries

95

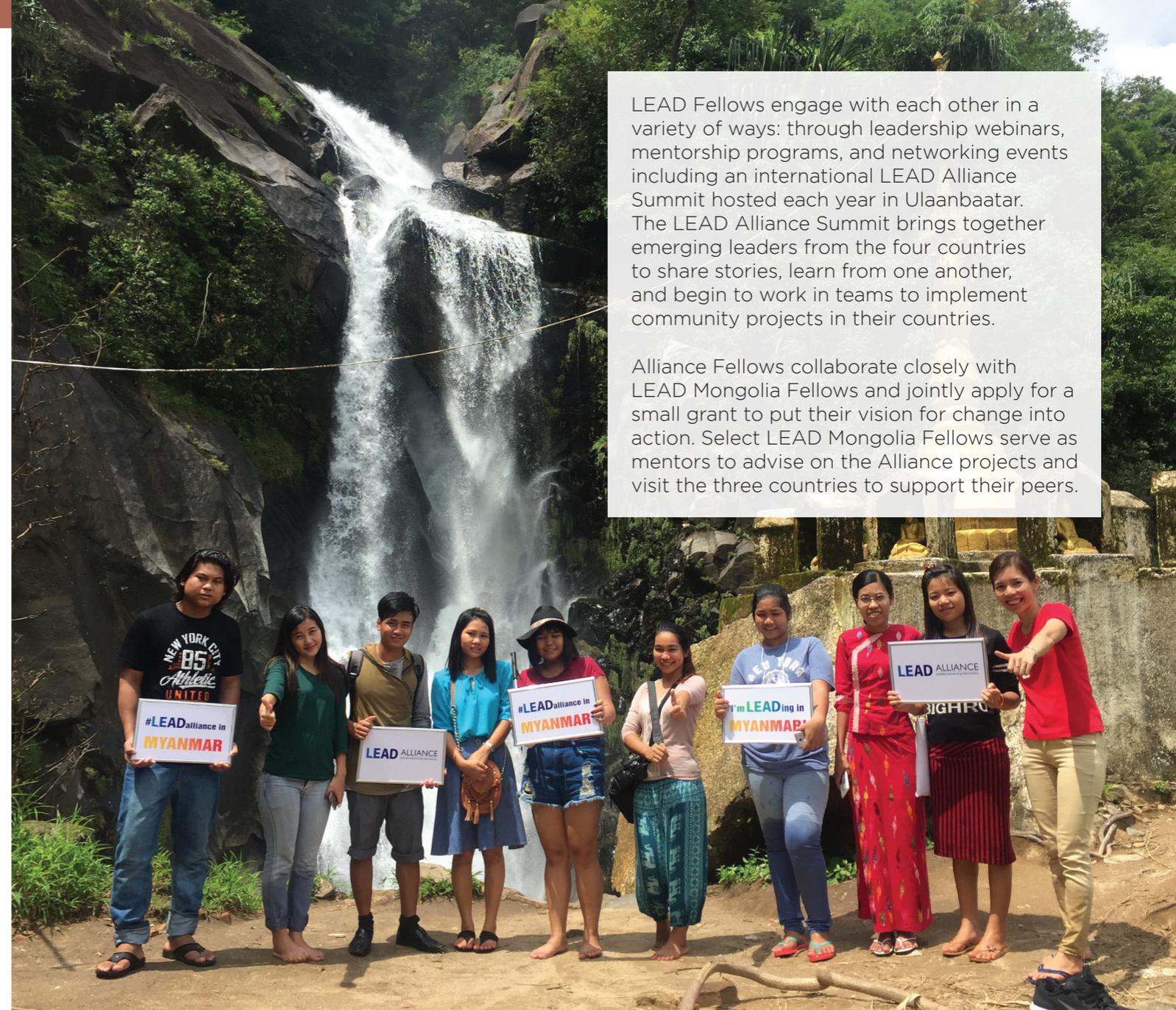
Fellows from four countries took part in LEAD Alliance Summits in Ulaanbaatar in 2017 and 2018.

6

community projects implemented involving 18 events and trainings, which reached 1,675 citizens in three countries

12

Mongolian mentors traveled to Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar to advise on projects and share Mongolia's democracy story



LEAD Fellows engage with each other in a variety of ways: through leadership webinars, mentorship programs, and networking events including an international LEAD Alliance Summit hosted each year in Ulaanbaatar. The LEAD Alliance Summit brings together emerging leaders from the four countries to share stories, learn from one another, and begin to work in teams to implement community projects in their countries.

Alliance Fellows collaborate closely with LEAD Mongolia Fellows and jointly apply for a small grant to put their vision for change into action. Select LEAD Mongolia Fellows serve as mentors to advise on the Alliance projects and visit the three LEAD countries to support their peers.

# PROJECT PROFILE

## Leadership Starts with Inclusion is one of the six LEAD Alliance projects implemented to date.

Young people with disabilities face tremendous challenges in Kyrgyzstan. Across the country, they are needlessly excluded from services and educational opportunities.

“Kyrgyzstan remains one of the most unfriendly countries to live for persons with disabilities,” argues Dildora Khamidova, a human rights activist and LEAD Alliance Fellow from Kyrgyzstan.

Dildora and team of five other LEAD Alliance Fellows are taking an important step to combat the social exclusion faced by young persons with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan. As part of their LEAD Alliance project, the group launched *Leadership Starts with Inclusion*, a project to empower young people with disabilities by providing them tailored computer literacy and vocational



trainings so that they are better prepared for employment. The three-month project provided a much-needed support system for 19 disabled youth in the cities of Bishkek and Osh, ultimately improving their confidence, promoting social integration, and proving that inclusion is possible through small but thoughtful efforts.

LEAD Alliance Fellow Ainagul Abdrakhmanova says children

with disabilities are needlessly excluded from services and educational opportunities across Kyrgyzstan.

“Youth with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups as their rights are violated numerously. They don't have access to good quality education, medical services, and employment.” - Ainagul Abdrakhmanova, LEAD Alliance Fellow



The team's LEAD Mongolia peer mentors M.Zoljargal and Sh.Vyenyera traveled to Kyrgyzstan in March 2018 to oversee the implementation of *Leadership Starts with Inclusion* and offer guidance. Zoljargal and Vyenyera agree that Leadership Starts with Help is providing much needed opportunities for disabled children to learn, socialize, and form friendships.

During their trip, the two mentors observed the quality of the trainings and provided their mentees with guidance and new ideas. The trip also allowed them to reflect on the many ways that Mongolia's history of democratic progress truly serves as model in the areas of civic activism and political freedom.

This is only one highlight of many such opportunities gained by the 12 LEAD Mongolian

mentors selected so far to provide project management support for their LEAD Alliance mentees in the region. Mongolian mentors have supported similar projects, such as an environmental clean-up campaign in rural Bhutan and a youth civic empowerment program in rural Myanmar, which have reached thousands of citizens and exposed them to Mongolia's democracy story.

# LEAD High School Civic Education

With Mongolia's younger generation questioning the value of democracy, civic education is critical. However, civic education is not a required subject at the high school level, and teachers receive inadequate formal training to run civic engagement activities. LEAD Mongolia confronts this gap by introducing Mongolia-specific civic education curricula for use in schools and conducting extracurricular activities which encourage youth to advocate for solutions to community problems.

LEAD Mongolia introduced **Foundations of Democracy, an intensive four-section civic education textbook designed specifically for the Mongolian high school student.**

Since 2016, LEAD has trained 428 high school teachers from 242 schools from across Mongolia on how to use the

textbook. In addition, 2,100 copies of *Foundations of Democracy* have been printed and delivered to their schools.



## LEAD Civic Education by numbers to date

458

high school teachers from 242 schools trained in *Foundations of Democracy* civic education curriculum

2,981

students from 70 high schools in 11 aimags took part in Project Citizen

2,100

copies of *Foundations of Democracy* textbook distributed to 242 high schools across Mongolia

We also introduced **Project Citizen-an interactive methodology used in 60 countries worldwide. It offers young students an opportunity to engage in local issues** by encouraging them to identify



a community-based challenge they would like to see changed and take proactive steps toward achieving those changes. LEAD selected 70 schools in 11 aimags to take part in Project Citizen, which involved 140 teachers and over 2,981 students. In March 2018, LEAD hosted the first-ever Project Citizen National Competition in Ulaanbaatar with 12 teams from across the country where each team demonstrated how they are making a positive mark on their school and community. Both

*Foundations of Democracy* and Project Citizen train social science teachers to provide students practical skills to engage their communities and government. In the coming years, we will continue these efforts, printing more copies of *Foundations of Democracy* and training teachers from 100 additional schools. LEAD will also host annual Project Citizen Competitions, encouraging hundreds more students to become pioneers for local change.

# PROJECT PROFILE

## High Schoolers in Action: Empowered to Change Their Communities

School 29 in Ulaanbaatar is Mongolia's one-and-only school for deaf and hard of hearing students. Deaf students are not integrated into Mongolia's general education scheme, and so students and teachers at School 29 have struggled to secure the resources they need in a system that seldom recognizes the needs of young persons with disabilities. Thanks to LEAD's Project Citizen, a group of 20 high school students are learning how to advocate for their right to receive a quality education.

Tuul Batsuren, a teacher at School 29 and disability rights advocate, joined Project Citizen - a campaign encouraging teachers and students to address issues in their



communities - after receiving training from LEAD where she learned how to introduce civic engagement among her students. She and her students ran a school-wide survey to determine the top concerns of students at School 29. One of those concerns was the fact that the school and student dormitories use a traditional bell system to alert students of emergencies or the end of class. But students at School 29 can't hear the bell. The Project Citizen team quickly went to work to research their rights and the resources they would need. They gained community support and met with government officials and international organizations to demand a change. As a result, School 29 is receiving support

to install a lighting system to replace the bell system so that students will not need to worry about missing class or being unaware of an emergency. Tuul and her students convinced the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports to commit 10 million Mongolian Tughrig (MNT) to fund the new lighting system and other materials. They were also featured on national television (Eagle TV), allowing them to raise awareness among thousands of Mongolians about the barriers faced by children with disabilities. **Tuul says this issue would never have been fixed were it not for Project Citizen - and now students feel empowered to create a positive change in their school and community.**



President of Mongolia Kh.Battulga praised initiatives such as this one at the 2018 Project Citizen National Competition.

“The main purpose of this project is for students to bring up issues and challenges they face at their schools and in their communities through extensive research, develop plans based on relevant laws and regulations, and then propose it to decision-makers to solve it together,” he said. “This is what we want to see happen.”

# Our LEADing Principles:

World Learning instills select principles into all LEAD Mongolia programming and encourages all participants to embrace these values.

## DIVERSITY

Encouraging a diversity of skills, professions, interests, and social identities among all participants in order to sustain constructive and meaningful networking among participants

## SOCIAL INCLUSION

Improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society.

## PARTICIPANT OWNERSHIP

Encouraging participants to make substantive decisions about the course of their own program experience

## LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Inviting local stakeholders to inform the design and development of the LEAD program, specifically in ways which impact their communities

## YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Elevating the voices of youth for youth

## AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

Developing leaders who are empathetic, committed to service, and use decision-making skills for the better and inclusion of others

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Putting new ideas, skills, and knowledge into action through project planning, implementation, or other advocacy and community-based efforts

## CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACH TO ADVOCACY

Ensuring participants understand democratic good governance through a whole-of-society lens, not as the sole responsibility of government, and expand their advocacy approaches by engaging public, private, and civil society sectors.

# Looking Forward

World Learning and USAID Mongolia are pleased to announce the LEAD initiative will continue through the coming three years! We are eager to expand this powerful network of promising democracy advocates in Mongolia and the surrounding region. Through 2021, the program will introduce an additional 130 LEAD Mongolia Fellows, 30 new LEAD Alliance Fellows from Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan and Myanmar, as well as renewed civic education activities among thousands of high school students across the country.

The journey is not over for our LEAD Fellows. This is just the beginning. In the years ahead, all our LEAD Mongolia Fellows-and future cohorts, too-will continue to take on projects that champion democracy. Together, they will transform their communities.

# Engage with LEAD

Interested in supporting our fellows on their journeys to advance positive change? Your financial support offers an excellent way for your organization to achieve its social responsibility, environmental, or social impact goals. World Learning, an international organization specializing in project oversight, will ensure your support is well managed and tailored to your vision of social responsibility.

You can also get involved as a LEAD mentor to help coach our LEAD Mongolia Fellows through their project planning. To find out more about those opportunities - or to learn more about what we do - contact us.



# Thank you to our many contributors

We thank many of Mongolia's public and private sector organizations for their continued support. We also thank the Government of Mongolia, namely the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Office of the President of Mongolia, for their ongoing support to LEAD Mongolia. In addition, we thank our countless friends and counterparts from Mongolia's rich civil society sector for guiding us and helping us remain true to our vision of equal, inclusive democratic development. Lastly, we're of course thankful for the continued support of our donor, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as the fervent support of U.S. Embassy Ulaanbaatar.





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