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WOCAT



Promoting Dryland Sustainable Landscapes and Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Steppe of Mongolia

Gender Case Studies

Ts. Tserendulam M&E
T.Erdenejargal, NPM



E-LEARNING SERIES

Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program on
DRYLAND SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

MONGOLIA



- **Location:** Landlocked country in **East-Central Asia**, bordered by Russia to the north and China to the south.
- **Capital:** **Ulaanbaatar**, home to nearly half the population.
- **Area:** **1.56 million** square kilometers (603,909 square miles), making it the 18th largest country in the world
- **Population:** Approx. 3.5 million (2024).
- **Administrative division:** 21 provinces (aimag) and 330 soums.
- **Culture:** Strong **nomadic** traditions, with about 30% of the population still practicing **pastoralism**.
- **Landscapes:** Features the Gobi Desert, vast steppes, and mountain ranges.
- **SPA:** 21% of territories (32 891 617 ha) protected by **Law of Specially Protected Area**
- **Main economic sectors:** Mining, agriculture, and services (including tourism, transportation, logistics, banking, finance, and telecommunications).
- **GDP per capita:** 6,691.48 USD (2024)
- **CO2 emissions per capita:** 8.08 metric tons (2023) (World Bank)



NOMADIC MONGOLIAN GER (YURT)



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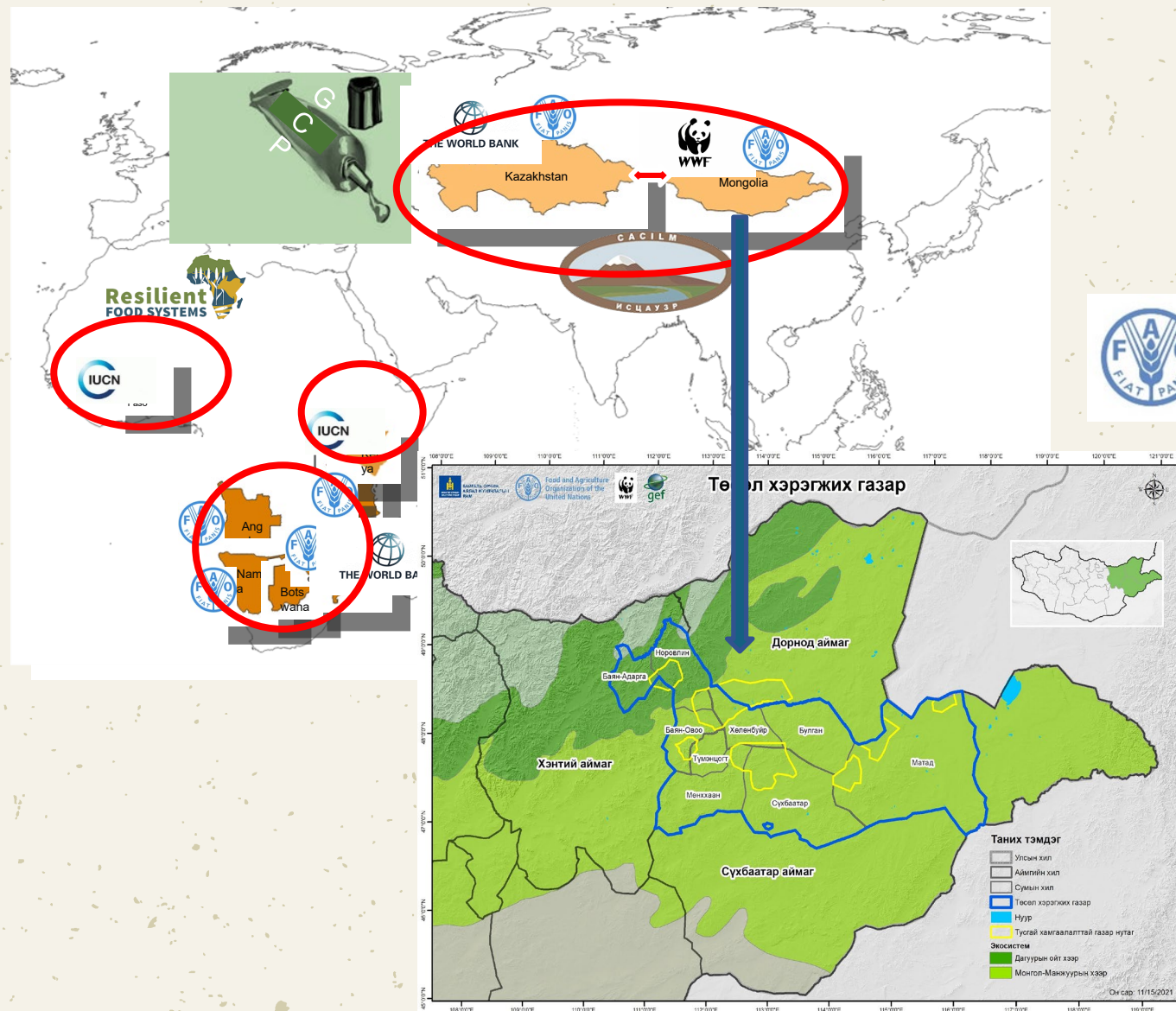


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The project information:

Promoting Dryland Sustainable Landscapes and Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Steppe of

Mongolia



Background Information of the project target soums

Demographics: The 9 target soums have a total population of 24,841, with a gender distribution of 53.4% men and 46.6% women. High male dominance is attributed to mining and rural-urban migration.

Socio-economic Issues: High poverty rates and unemployment, exacerbated by infrastructure deficits and climate-induced challenges.

Gender Disparities: Men have shorter life expectancies, and women face barriers to entrepreneurship. Despite higher employment rates, women are underrepresented in decision-making roles. Domestic violence remains a concern.

CHALLENGES AND GAPS

- **Gender Dynamics:** Persistent gender biases and traditional roles, with low female representation in decision-making and leadership, particularly in rural areas.
- **Economic Barriers:** Limited access to resources and financial support for women, alongside issues of domestic violence and low entrepreneurship opportunities.
- **Social Tensions:** Migration and increased herding pressure contribute to environmental and social stresses, with some shifts in gender roles leading to tensions.
- **Vulnerability:** Herders with small households, especially female-headed ones, are more vulnerable. Degraded pastureland due to lifestyle changes and children's schooling impacts traditional herding practices.
- **Policy and Governance:** Gender equality laws exist, but implementation is weak. Local governance lacks experience, and political party influence affects appointments, hindering effective development and coordination.

CONSIDERATIONS

- **Respect Local Norms:** Tailor approaches to local traditions and involve women and men in gender mainstreaming efforts.
- **Empower Through Training:** Provide gender-sensitive training to boost women's confidence and effectiveness.
- **Ensure Equal Access:** Address gaps in access to resources and use technology to overcome barriers.
- **Supportive Policies:** Implement and enforce policies that guarantee women's rights and integrate gender considerations into national strategies.
- **Track Progress:** Use gender-disaggregated data to monitor and evaluate progress.
- **Promote Leadership:** Encourage women in leadership roles to shift power dynamics.
- **Collaborate Across Sectors:** Strengthen partnerships to enhance gender mainstreaming impact.



PARTICIPATORY INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

- Interdisciplinary and multistakeholder working groups were established in provinces and soums, with trainings focused on climate protection, biodiversity, land degradation, environmental and social risks, and gender-sensitive land management.
- These sessions led to collaborative discussions on land management issues and solutions for sustainable land use and restoration. A total of 11,173 citizens (47% men, 53% women), with a near-equal gender split, provided feedback on the draft land management plan for their areas.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote gender-sensitive integrated landscape management
- Enhance the sustainability of land management practices
- Improve livelihoods
- Strengthen community resilience

INTERVENTION

- The project provides training to enhance women's skills, improves their access to resources, and secures their land rights.
- The project also advocates for gender-sensitive policies by engaging with local authorities to promote equality in land management.
- QR codes to improve access to information and feedback.

OUTCOMES

- Increased Participation of Women:** Women's perspectives were integrated into land use plans, leading to more equitable and sustainable outcomes.
- Improved Land Management Practices:** Women's knowledge of indigenous water conservation techniques improved soil fertility and water retention.
- Enhanced Livelihoods:** Improved food security and income generation for both women and men. Women who participated in the project reported increased agricultural productivity and access to markets, leading to higher household incomes.
- Strengthened Community Resilience:** Enhanced the resilience of the entire community to land degradation and climate change. Women's participation in land management helped ensure that interventions were more inclusive and addressed the needs of all community members.



SUSTAINABLE CASHMERE PRACTICES

- Cashmere production is a significant economic activity in regions such as Mongolia, but it has faced challenges related to environmental sustainability and gender inequality. Traditionally, the cashmere industry has been dominated by male herders, while women, who often manage household and livestock tasks, have had limited access to decision-making processes and benefits.
- The project included competency-based training, resource provision, and market linkages to enhance sustainable cashmere production and support gender equality.

OBJECTIVES

- Enhanced sustainability of cashmere production
- Strengthen community resilience
- Improve livelihoods
- Promote social inclusion and equality

INTERVENTION

The project offered competency-based training on "Cashmere Combing and Sorting" to 120 herders (70% female, 30% male) across 7 soums, focusing on sustainable cashmere production. It also provided seven cooperatives with grading bags to improve sorting practices. Additionally, the project helped 8 cooperatives, including 3 women-led ones, achieve SFA certification for sustainable standards and establish market linkages.

OUTCOMES

- **Increased Gender Inclusion:** Empowered women by including them in the training and certification process. Women-led cooperatives gained recognition and improved their market position.
- **Enhanced Sustainability:** Adoption of sustainable cashmere practices and improved sorting techniques reduced environmental impact and improved product quality.
- **Improved Income:** Cooperatives received a premium price of 5,000 MNT per kilogram for SFA-certified cashmere, leading to increased income and financial benefits.
- **Certification Success:** Achieved certification for 8 cooperatives, enhancing their credibility and market access.



EMPOWERING WOMEN IN HOUSEHOLD FARMING

- In the Eastern Steppes of Mongolia, vegetable farming is a comparatively new livelihood activity, and vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, people with disabilities, and poor families often face significant challenges in accessing resources and opportunities.
- Male farmers often have bigger plots and plant crops but female farmers usually have smaller plot/household level gardening.
- The project aimed to enhance their climate-smart agricultural productivity and economic stability through a combination of technical assistance, financial support, and capacity building.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve climate-smart agricultural practices to reduce land degradation
- Empower vulnerable groups
- Increase access to resources
- Promote social inclusion and equality

INTERVENTION

The project identified barriers for female-headed households, people with disabilities, and poor families, providing inclusive training in climate-smart vegetable farming. It offered adaptive tools, small grants, and accessible infrastructure. Community engagement promoted inclusivity and challenged stereotypes, while a "farm to table" approach helped participants grow, market, and sell their produce, boosting economic stability.

OUTCOMES

- Participants saw higher vegetable yields and income through climate-smart practices like improved soil management and water-efficient irrigation, boosting productivity and reducing land degradation.
- Improved access to resources and tools enabled greater participation, with climate-smart techniques supporting sustainable farming.
- The project promoted social inclusion by challenging stereotypes and recognizing the value of diverse contributions to sustainable land management.
- Climate-smart practices led to better financial stability and food security, with increased savings and investment opportunities.
- Participants gained skills, confidence, and economic independence through climate-smart training, enhancing their control over farming activities and resilience to climate impacts.



BEEKEEPING FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

- Beekeeping is a crucial livelihood activity that supports food security, income generation, and environmental sustainability. However, women in many rural areas are often underrepresented in beekeeping due to limited access to resources, technical knowledge, and financial support.
- This case study examines a gender mainstreaming initiative designed to support female beekeepers by providing technical support and financial grants, aimed at promoting gender equality and improving their economic outcomes.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase the participation of women in beekeeping
- Provide technical support and resources
- Enhance economic outcomes
- Enhance additional household income from non-livestock activities

INTERVENTION

The project began with a gender analysis to identify barriers faced by women in beekeeping, such as limited access to resources, knowledge gaps, and financial constraints. Based on this, a needs assessment was conducted to tailor support. Women received comprehensive technical training on various beekeeping aspects, including hive management and marketing, delivered by experienced beekeepers. Each participant was provided with a start-up grant for equipment and bee colonies to overcome financial barriers.

OUTCOMES

- The project increased women's involvement in beekeeping, leading to new businesses and local economic growth.
- Training improved participants' beekeeping skills, enhancing hive management and honey yields.
- Start-up grants and support boosted economic stability, with increased income from honey sales.
- The project challenged traditional gender roles, shifting community perceptions and supporting female beekeepers.
- Mentorship and support networks provided valuable peer support and collaboration, enhancing success and sustainability.



PROMOTING FEMALE RANGER

- In Mongolia, less than 22% of the wildlife ranger workforce is female. Traditionally, ranger roles have been male-dominated, with limited representation and support for female rangers. Recognizing the unique strengths of female rangers, such as their natural communication skills and nurturing nature, the project aimed to increase female representation and showcase their contributions to wildlife conservation.
- The project specifically supported Gerelchimeg Z, a female ranger from Munkhkhaan soum, Sukhbaatar aimag, to enhance her capacity and visibility.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase female representation in environmental sector
- Build skills and capacity
- Promote Gender Inclusivity
- Enhance Working Conditions

INTERVENTION

- **Capacity Building:** Provided technical support and tools to Gerelchimeg Z to improve her skills and effectiveness as a ranger. This included additional training and resources to help her excel in her role.
- **Recognition and Advocacy:** Produced a short video highlighting Gerelchimeg Z's dedication and achievements. The video aimed to raise awareness of the contributions of female rangers and promote best practices.

OUTCOMES

- Gerelchimeg Z was selected as the Best Ranger of the Year in 2023 by the Ministry of the Environment and Tourism of Mongolia. This recognition served to inspire other female rangers and underscore their valuable role in conservation.
- Gerelchimeg Z's improved skills and capacity were recognized, showcasing the benefits of supporting female rangers.
- The video and award highlighted the dedication of female rangers, serving as a powerful example and role model for others in the field.
- Female rangers like Gerelchimeg Z strengthened relationships within their communities, utilizing their communication skills and nurturing qualities to enhance conservation efforts.



SUPPORTING YOUNG BEEKEEPERS

- To promote eco-friendly business and income generation in the protected area, the project supported female and young male beekeepers in Khar Yamaat NR. Initially, these beekeepers operated on a small scale with a limited number of bees and faced challenges wintering their hives in extreme cold.
- A specific focus was placed on supporting a young boy, Tuvshinbayar, who showed interest in beekeeping but faced societal pressures that typically reserved such activities for adults or men.

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce pressure on natural resource use
- Empower young people through beekeeping
- Foster intergenerational learning
- Enhance household income

INTERVENTION

- The project launched beekeeping training specifically for young people, including Tuvshinbayar, covering techniques such as hive management and sustainable practices, with sessions held after school to avoid interfering with their education. Tuvshinbayar was paired with a local experienced beekeeper for mentorship, receiving guidance and support while setting up his hives. It also provided technical training, 200 beehives, and winter shelters to beekeepers.

OUTCOMES

- Tuvshinbayar successfully managed his beehive, including wintering his bees without losses, and produced more honey that provided pocket money and contributed to his family's finances.
- The project challenged gender norms, leading to greater community acceptance of both boys and girls in non-traditional roles.
- It empowered Tuvshinbayar and other youths with practical skills and confidence, impacting their education and career aspirations.
- Tuvshinbayar's beekeeping increased household income and demonstrated the benefits of engaging young people in productive activities, encouraging other families to support similar efforts.

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