

# THE ProjectsAbroad™ Land of Blue Sky

November 2011, Issue no.23    Projects Abroad Mongolia Newsletter

87 years of independence in

MONGOLIA



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## Director's note

*S*ain baina uu,

2011 is an amazing year for Projects Abroad Mongolia. We have had record numbers of volunteers visiting us, who have helped in various parts of the community.

With warm regards,

Okto Togtuun

*Country Director,*

*Projects Abroad Mongolia*



## Editor's note

*H*ey everyone!

Get a glimpse of what it would be like if you volunteer here, in the Land of Blue Sky.

Hope you'll enjoy your stay here,

Have a wonderful month,

Sumia

*Social Manager*

*Projects Abroad Mongolia*



# Inside-out

## November in Mongolia

We've had a few days of snow since September, but that is until yesterday, when we awoke to snow on the ground, ice on the sidewalks and the sense that it is officially and undeniably winter now. Thankfully the temperatures have still been pretty mild and we've just been enjoying the snow, the chilliness.



Apart from snow, the Christmas, New year trees and decorations are being put in front of big department stores and offices, which gives the excitement and spirit of upcoming holidays.

Most importantly, 26th Nov 2011 is Mongolia's Independence Day.

# Destination of the month

## Altai Tavan Bogd National Park



In Altai Tavan Bogd National Park, snow capped mountains, glacial valleys, forests and beautiful lakes and rivers create a majestic setting. In the north of the park, Khuiten peak (4374m, the highest point of Mongolia) of the Altai Tavan Bogd Mountains and the Potuninii Glacier (23km<sup>2</sup>) draw alpine enthusiasts from around the world. This park extends over 6,300km<sup>2</sup> of land, including Altai, Sagsai, Ulaanhus and Tsengel soums. There are about 35 glaciers in the Altai Tavan Bogd including Potaninii Glacier. Throughout the park fishing, hiking canoeing, camping and horseback and camel riding are possible. In addition to recreational activities, the park is rich in archaeological sites including petroglyphs, Turkic men stone and burial mounds([via](#)).

# News

## THE UUB POST

### 2 Boys Emerge as the "Mongolian 7th Billion Children"

By B.BYAMBADORJ



At 1:49:23 AM (GMT +8,) Ulaanbaatar-Mongolian time, the National Statistical Office of Mongolia has informed us that the world population has reached 7 billion. During this moment, mothers from every corner of the world were celebrating newborn babies as "7th Billion Children." In

Mongolia, 21 babies were born during this time, and 2 of them were born before 1:49:50 AM, only a 37 second difference from the time of the announcement.

L. Deedentsetseg gave birth to a son and a mother named B. Enkhtuvshin gave birth to another boy in Orkhon aimag. They will receive consecrations on National Statistical Day, November. 11.

We visited Ms. Deedentsetseg, at the National Maternity Center. She works as the Deputy Chief of the Cargo Department at Ulaanbaatar Railway Station. Her son weighs 3.1 kilograms, with a height of 50 centimeters.

Congratulations on becoming the mother of the "Mongolian 7th Billion Child." When did you get the news?

-Thank you. Today, many people called me on the phone and congratulated me. First I heard about it on C1 Television. It seems that they have been counting the time until the birth of the 7 billionth children. They came to visit me on the day I gave birth to my son. They were giving out questionnaires that night to the mothers who were giving birth. I was too tired to give much thought into it but then my son became one of the "Mongolian 7th Billion Children."

# Volunteers in action

Photo article  
Irene Richardson, Connor Cataldo (Journalism project)



# Volunteer stories

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*Ruth Allerstorfer (Journalism project volunteer)*

Ok, so I've been here in Outer Mongolia for almost 9 weeks now, which is actually kind of hard to believe as these have been 9 of the fastest weeks I've experienced to date. The first thing to learn about life in Ulaanbaatar (UB) is that there is always something going on (although half the time people have no clue what it actually is you are witnessing), and that no day can ever be the same unless you stay holed up in your bedroom hiding under the covers.

I arrived in Mongolia at 8am on a Sunday morning. The first thing that struck me on disembarking at Chinggis Khan Airport, was how deadly quiet everything seemed to be, and the lack of the general official-ness I've come across at every other airport I've ever been to. Arriving on a Sunday also gave me a false impression of the city, as everything was pretty quiet and semi-organised (with hindsight, I can add that this is because people don't generally make it outside until about 2pm on Sundays).

These misconceptions of a semi-peaceful Asian capital were resoundingly shattered the following morning however, when I beheld UB's Monday morning rush hour in all its glory: cars of all shapes and sizes driving haphazardly everywhere and grid-locking Peace Avenue and the other big streets, and a general consensus that traffic rules are more like guidelines anyway. Crossing any major road is an adventure itself – you generally need a group of about 6 people to form a critical mass to stop the oncoming traffic (or, alternatively, you just go for it and hope they stop)...



Ulaanbaatar is, surprisingly, one of the most international cities I've been in; in my first couple of weeks I managed to locate a French bakery (which does amazing pain au chocolat); a German restaurant and Café with authentic Bratwurst and Apfelstrudel; a vegan restaurant with the best salad in the city, and of course numerous other nice cafes and places to eat.

Eating out is possibly the only really cheap thing I've discovered here – most other consumables and consumer goods carry similar price tags to back home which surprised me rather a lot (unless of course you go to the Black Market and are prepared to barter for a while). It has made me wonder how Mongolians manage to live here though, as one of the other volunteers remarked that doctors earn about \$250 a month...

My Projects Abroad placement has been as a journalist with the Mongol Messenger; most definitely one of those experiences where the internship is what you make of it.

I came here up for doing pretty much anything, and consequently have been having a superbly great time and have been kept pretty busy, doing stuff no-one would let an intern anywhere near back home in Scotland.

Highlights so far include an expenses paid 2-night trip to Terelj National Park for a huge international ADB Conference; a visit to Hustei National Park with UNDP Administrator Helen Clark; meeting a variety of ambassadors (some are really nice people!); and free entry into all the galleries and concerts in the city if I flash my press badge and write a story about it afterwards.

Probably the hardest thing to get used to with regard to the placement was the Mongolian sense of time. Now, back home, journalism is a high-pressure job with tight deadlines and people constantly rushing around looking busy. Here, it's far more relaxed, and when somebody says "it'll start at 1.30", you can pretty much guarantee you'll still be waiting come 2 o'clock. It was really hard to break out of my European time-sense of "better early than on time" and adapt to Mongolia's "better late than never" approach, which takes the classic saying to new extremes.

The host family I'm staying with is really great – they are proud of Mongolians' reputation for hospitality and keen for me to experience this to the full. It's definitely been worth my time getting to know them better, as I now have a really nice environment to come back to in the evenings if I fancy just chillaxing with a book, or watching TV. Mongolians LOVE TV – you can be guaranteed to find one in pretty much any place you go to, and there are numerous showings of badly dubbed classic English films (watching a group of Mongolians avidly following Braveheart, with Mel Gibson crying out "Freedom!" in Mongolian was most definitely a unique experience!).

The local food is really nice if you like lots of meat, fat, grease and not much fruit / vegetables to speak of. Personally that's not my favourite kind of meal, so I've ended up eating at a lot of international restaurants for lunch, keeping stocked up on multivit tablets, and have offered to cook for my family occasionally in the evenings. This was good fun but a challenge in itself, as trying to find herbs or spices here is almost impossible! (It took me 9 weeks to locate cinnamon). That said, some parts of Mongolian food are really nice (like Huushur and Mongolian fried pancakes), it just gets a bit overwhelming all at once.

It's also an interesting experience challenging a Mongolian to chess; those that play take it very seriously, and I've many times perplexed my host father by not following any particular strategy and 'just jumping around' with my knight...

In a nutshell, I'm having a super time out here and really enjoying being in Mongolia. The people are generally warm and welcoming (although working professionals, especially women, have a very steely, competitive edge to them you don't see much of in Europe), and it's incredible waking up every day to blue sky and sunshine. For someone from Scotland, it's pretty insane to have had only 3 rainy days in 9 weeks!

I probably wouldn't choose to be in UB during the winter though, as the smog is already getting noticeably annoying at the beginning of November, and the traffic fumes have started to build up in the evenings so you can taste car exhausts on your way home. On the plus side however, the thicker air means UB now has some amazing sunsets.



# What's on!

## Social activities

Photos from huushuur event. View more on our official [facebook](#) group!



# More about Mongolia

## Independence Day/ Constitution day

The Mongol empire was founded by Genghis Khan in 1206 and has since been ruled by various nomadic empires. Mongolia declared independence in 1911 from the collapsing Qing Dynasty, but struggled due to "de facto independence", we had declared independence, but China did not recognize this new independence or apply legal constraints to protect it. Struggling, Mongolia turned to Russia for help.

In 1920 the Russians invaded Mongolia and liberated them from occupation by the newly formed Republic of China. To eliminate any future Chinese threat from the Russian border, it was decided to install an independent communist Mongolian government on 11th July 1921. This is now celebrated by the Naadam festival, 11th to 13th July each year. This is the biggest festival in Mongolia, at which, contestants participate in the three manly sports of wrestling, archery and horse riding.

The interesting fact is Mongolia has two Independence day celebrations.

Mongolia worked from 1921 until 1924 on their new constitution. Mongolians celebrate their Independence Day on November 26<sup>th</sup> of every year. The constitution created the Mongolian People's Republic. In 1992 a new constitution was established and the 'People's Republic' was dropped from the name. However this day is still celebrated as our official Independence Day.



# Cookery corner

## Snowballs made from Aarts



Aarts(aarts) are curds made from sour milk (Mongolian yoghurt) that can be eaten in many ways. We have pies, cakes, hot beverages, ice creams, shakes and desserts made with it. You can even buy packaged aarts from almost every supermarket here.

On this November issue, we will share a super healthy, simple and yummy dessert made from aarts. As it snowed heavily today (11.11.11) in Ulaanbaatar, so it'd great to make some snowballs made from Aarts!

What you will need:

A cup of aarts

3 t.spoons of Sour cream

3 t.spoons of sugar

The process:

1. Get a medium bowl, put the aarts in it
2. Then add 3t. spoons of sour cream, mix with spoon
3. Add sugar, mix with spoon or clean hands to get a round shape
4. Finally, swirl and twirl the round mass until it looks like a snowball to you.

Simple, yet yummy!

# Events in December

ProjectsAbroad

*Meet new people,  
Get to know our culture,  
Learn, help, explore!*







## Projects Abroad Mongolia

Questions, new ideas about/for the events? Contact our Social manager Sumi!

**E-mail:**

[mongoliasocialmanager@projects-abroad.org](mailto:mongoliasocialmanager@projects-abroad.org)

**Phone number:** 88067781

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			 <b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
			<b>WORLD AIDS DAY</b>			
 <b>5</b> <b>INT. VOLUNTEER DAY</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <b>HUMAN RIGHTS DAY</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
					<b>TRIP TO TERELJ</b>	
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 	
			<b>NEW YEAR EVENT</b>			

# About us



**Mr. Otgonbayar T.**

Job title: *Country Director*



**Mrs Otganbayar D.**

*Operation manager*

**Miss Sumiya B.**

*Social manager*

**Mrs Ariunzul G.**

*Project supervisor*



**Mrs Saruul G.**

*Project supervisor*

**Miss Zolzaya N.**

*Project supervisor*

**Miss Enkhmaa O.**

*Desk officer*

### Join our Official Facebook Group!

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

### Follow us on Twitter!

[Twitter page](#)

### Read our Official Newsletter!

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

### Have a look at our Official Country Blog!

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

*Dear volunteers,*

*Send your stories, opinions, experiences,  
funny anecdotes and pictures, absolutely  
anything you want to share with everyone!*

*To: Sumi*

*Email: [mongoliasocialmanager@projects-abroad.org](mailto:mongoliasocialmanager@projects-abroad.org)*

*Best wishes,  
Projects Abroad Mongolia*