



# CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIONS IN DIGITALIZATION OF EDUCATION:

## CASE STUDY OF MONGOLIA

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# THREE VERY DIFFERENT REGIONS OF MONGOLIA



Field research aimed to identify:

- 1. Educational challenges** for children of
  - a. Ethnic minorities in Hovd province
  - b. Suburban schools in Bayanzurkh district, Ulaanbaatar
  - c. Nomadic herders and mining areas in the Gobi
- 2. Good practices of school teachers** and educational institutions in remote areas

## 1. Hovd aimag (province)

- Altai mountain region
- 1600km from Ulaanbaatar
- Home to a diverse range of ethnic groups (up to 16)

## 2. Bayanzurkh District, Ulaanbataar

- Representative of central part of Mongolia
- Biggest district of 9 other districts of Ulaanbaatar

## 3. Omnogobi aimag (province), Gobi region

- 1560km from Ulaanbaatar
- Within state labour in-migration is high due to jobs at mining companies

# RESEARCH METHODS



Photos from fieldwork in Mongolia

**n = 231 participants**

- **Home stays (participant observation)**
- **Focus group discussions with students and parents and guardian**
- **Interviews:**
  - **School managers**
  - **Teachers**
  - **NGOs**
  - **Social society organizations**
  - **IT service companies**
  - **Local authorities**
  - **Professional institutions**
  - **Ministry level officers**



- ❖ Fieldwork conducted by 3 female and 3 male researchers
- ❖ Desk research on the Mongolian higher education system carried out by researchers from Mongolian National Research Institution of Education.



# AGE-BASED STUDENT VIEWS ON DISTANCE LEARNING



## Students aged 10-12

- Did not participate well in online lessons
- Spent a long time until they were able to reach online lessons during the pandemic
- Missed their friends and teachers
- Lacked data units and devices
- Found tele-lessons too fast
- Distance learning was not as good as when taught in class



## Students aged 15-17

- Spent time assisting their siblings with distance learning
- Improved their ICT knowledge
- Exclusion in cyberspace has increased.
- Internet posts can not be fully controlled in Mongolia
- City youth had a better experience of studying by distance learning
- Children of herder families could not access online lessons due to lack of internet access.

# WHAT AFFECTS STUDENTS' ACCESS TO DISTANCE LEARNING?

<b>Most access to distance learning</b>	<b>Average access to Distance Learning</b>	<b>Least access to distance learning</b>
Good parental support	Self-motivated and talented students	No parental support
Good parental support (but may have poor technical capabilities)	Children with someone's devices	Domestic violence at home
Peaceful family environment	Some members of family are involved	Pastoralist families in remote areas
Students with their own spaces	Self-motivated disabled children	No comfortable environment at home
	Children who live in settlements	Parents are alcohol dependent
		Children from poor households

# REGIONAL FINDINGS FROM STUDENT INTERVIEWS

## **Hovd aimag (Ethnic minority area)**

- The main income of ethnic Kazakh families in Buyant soum is vegetable planting for commercial purposes
- Children became involved in cultivation work. It is hard work for students instead of paying attention to study

## **Bayanzurkh, Ulaanbaatar (Suburban area)**

- There was a lot of online peer discrimination due to appearance in remote school 12-17
- Students preferred to work and make money or to become a shaman because they did have not right motivation from their parents

## **Tsogttsetsii, Omnogobi aimag (Mining area)**

- Due to differences in life opportunities, online discrimination among students has increased
- Some students are discriminated against by teachers. School teachers need good training in psychology and ethics

# GENDERED EDUCATIONAL DYNAMICS

In Mongolia, male and female children are equally enrolled in school.

During the lockdown, herder families' children - mainly high school boys - assisted their parents with moving the household to find good pasture.

Both girls and boys in upper years of suburban schools preferred to work and earn money in order to contribute to family livelihood.





# FATHERS ACROSS REGIONS ARE LESS INVOLVED IN EDUCATION



- Fathers are less involved in their children's academic affairs due to their workloads
- They typically work outside the home e.g. those who are herders or miners
- They say they lack academic knowledge to teach current lessons to their children
- In the mining area, fathers give their children money when they cannot spend time with them. Thus children spend that money on their entertainment.



# MOTHERS' VIEWS ON DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE THREE AREAS



## **Hovd aimag (Ethnic minority area)**

- Parents could focus on their primary school age children
- Kazakh children fall behind in elementary school because they only spoke Kazakh at home but the language of instruction is Mongolian.
- They reported that there was no distance education for disabled children in remote schools

## **Bayanzurkh, Ulaanbaatar (Suburban area)**

- Students assisted with family work when schools closed
- Mothers workload is high, mostly with service work. Children can not get motivation from mothers for education



## **Tsogttsetsii, Omnogobi aimag (Mining area)**

- Mothers left their children in school dorms or at home without a guardian. They work at mining company as service work.
- When mothers left money for children to buy food, they used the money on entertainment and spent more time out of school
- Mothers could not help their girls transition to teenagers

# TEACHERS AS DISTANCE EDUCATION INNOVATORS



**B. Erdenebat**

Social Science teacher, Hovd aimag

Voluntarily led best teacher's group of Social Science lesson within Hovd province. Distributed all topics to them. Made e-lesson content. Used to exchange for distance learning



**B. Oyunbileg**

English teacher, Rural school

Engaged students to improve their listening, speaking and writing skills in English by making sounds to children's movies and cartoons



**Odkhuu**

Math teacher, Omnogobi province

Combined his traditional method using blackboard with digital methods. Improved access and quality through classroom groups in Facebook.



**L. Lkhagvachuluun**

Primary school teacher, Rural school

Created her own e-content library before the National platform of education was established. Learned over 30 programs and apps to prepare interactive lessons.



**Thank you for your attention!**



## **Nomadic Nature Conservation**

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