

Box 7: Community Participation Strategy: Mongolia Urban Development Sector Project

Mongolia's Urban Development Sector Project aims to improve the living conditions and quality of life of urban residents, especially those living in traditional tent (or *ger*) areas in Ulaanbaatar. More specifically, the project provides (i) enhanced basic urban services, (ii) improved urban roads, (iii) small loans for water connections and on-plot facilities, and (iv) institutional development and training. Aside from improving basic infrastructure in the *ger* areas, the project is also expected to benefit people in these areas by offering access to small loans for households and neighborhood improvements, creating direct short-term employment as well as long-term income-generating opportunities, and empowering poor residents to participate in planning and implementing community infrastructure improvements through community-based organizations (CBOs).

The project design process adopted a bottom-up approach in which local governments and communities confirmed their interest in participating in the project by developing proposals for *ger* area improvements and community participation. Once core subprojects were selected, communities were engaged in project preparation through a household survey and focus-group discussions. Other stakeholders, including local government officials and community leaders, were also consulted extensively.

The project promotes a community-driven approach to *ger* area development, which is reflected in the project's community participation strategy. The strategy covers three main activities: (i) establishment of CBOs, (ii) provision of small loans, and (iii) public awareness raising and training. The establishment and strengthening of CBOs is the centerpiece of the strategy. CBOs are expected to facilitate citizen participation in the project and serve as community representatives to the local government, the public urban services organizations, and the project implementation unit. The project also provides affordable, small loans to households to pursue small-scale improvements on their own or as part of a CBO block or savings group. The loans may finance individual water connections and plot sanitation, smokeless or electric stoves, or minor housing improvements. To encourage residents to participate in and benefit from the project activities, education campaigns and training seminars—related to alternative sanitation and heating solutions, improved health and hygiene, and microfinance—will be carried out in consultation with the residents, local NGOs, local governments, and public urban services organizations. Members of savings and community groups will be trained as trainers, and these trainers in turn will conduct community-wide training activities.

The community participation strategy also recognizes the need to maximize the participation of women, who are primarily responsible for household maintenance and hygiene. To ensure women's participation, the project's gender action plan requires equal representation of women and men on CBO councils, equal access to employment and training opportunities, encouragement to women's groups to apply for block loans, and other measures. Sanitation, health, and hygiene awareness training will be provided to both men and women to encourage greater sharing of household responsibilities.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, CBOs will play a vital role in the conduct of public consultations, site visits, and household surveys during project implementation. Residents will also be directly involved in evaluating the project's impact on poverty reduction, gender inclusion, health improvements, and environmental improvements.

Source: ADB. 2006. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Loan to Mongolia: Urban Development Sector Project*, Supplementary Appendix L (Community Participation Strategy). Manila.