



# MONGOLIA

## EDUCATION SECTOR FACT SHEET

**Happy to learn.** Elementary students and their teacher in primary school, Umnugovi aimag (photo by Eric Sales).

## EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN

ADB has supported the development of three education sector master plans (ESMPs) in Mongolia since 1995 to improve planning and management of the education system. The preparation of the Education Sector Medium-Term Development Plan (ESMTDP) 2021–2030, jointly supported by ADB and other education sector development partners, was approved in October 2020. ADB intends to support plan implementation through a new technical assistance project. ADB has supported the Ministry of Education and Science in developing a comprehensive plan to recover from and reduce the learning loss of students caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In November 2021, ADB approved a knowledge and support technical assistance (TA) for implementing the ESMTDP. The TA aims to improve the quality of education in

Mongolia by (i) strengthening institutional systems and capacity to implement the ESMTDP, (ii) enhancing online learning systems and resources, and (iii) improving the professional development systems and capacity of teachers. In December 2021, ADB approved a TA project to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for Learning Loss Recovery in Primary and Secondary Education, 2021–2023, which aims to ensure quality and continued education for all groups in Mongolia, especially during the COVID-19 emergency. The TA will (i) improve teachers' knowledge and skills to assess students' learning, (ii) enhance teachers' skills in blended learning methods, (iii) strengthen schools' management for post-COVID-19 recovery, and (iv) assess the factors affecting learning loss and quality of learning outcomes.

Partnership in the education sector between the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Mongolia began in 1991 when the country started to transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. ADB's support during the transition period contributed to the recovery of school enrollment, which fell sharply after economic reorientation and job losses. In the subsequent years, ADB supported the government's efforts to reform the education system in line with international standards, encompassing early childhood education (ECE), primary and secondary education, higher education, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). ADB also provided timely assistance to support the education system after the country was hit by the financial crisis in 2009 and when it experienced severe economic difficulties in 2016. To date, ADB support for education in Mongolia amounts to \$185.256 million, comprising seven loans (\$137.5 million), seven grants (\$36.9 million), and 20 technical assistance operations (\$10.866 million).

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mongolia is a sparsely populated country with one-quarter of its population engaged in semi-nomadic herding. Attending ECE and starting primary education at the official school entry age is a particular challenge for children from herder families who move frequently throughout the year. In 2009–2013, through a grant from the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific (JFPR), ADB supported 135 mobile *ger* (traditional tent)

kindergartens. More than 4,900 children from herder families were able to attend regular ECE programs. Most of the children who attended kindergarten for the first time became better prepared for school. The grant also helped develop ECE policies and curriculum, teacher guides, and reference materials, and supported the ECE promotion campaigns and parent education activities. During the financial crisis in 2009–2010, an Asian Development

Fund grant supported a school feeding program, benefiting 148,000 children who might have either dropped out of or never enrolled in kindergarten. Since 2017, ADB lending has been supporting the construction and expansion of kindergartens to address the unmet demand for ECE in Ulaanbaatar.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The level of school enrollment and the condition of school and dormitory buildings deteriorated significantly during and after the transition period. From 1997 to 2010, ADB's loans and grants assisted the renovation of 294 schools—close to 40% of all schools in Mongolia. From 2004 through 2015, ADB also supported the transformation of the school education system

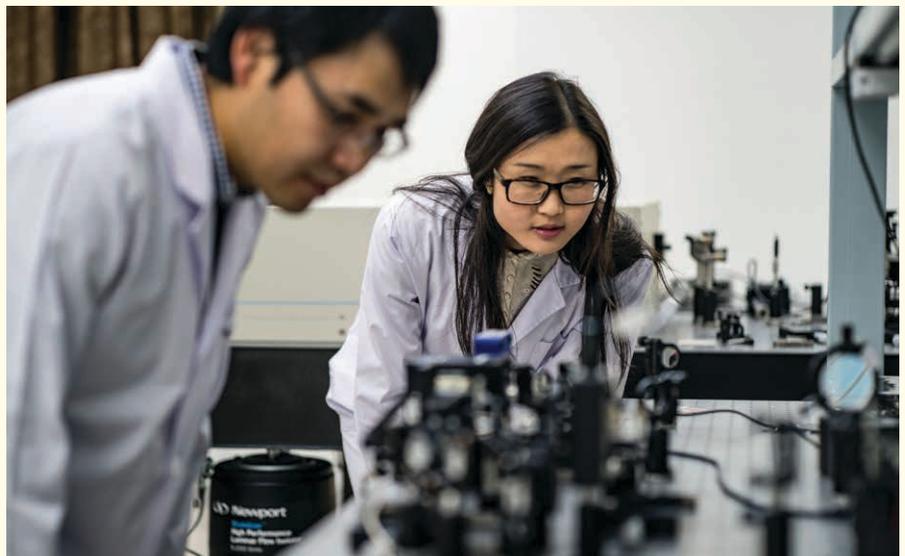


**Students doing experiments.** An upgraded physics laboratory in high school, Bayankhongor *aimag* (photo by Amgalanbayar Dashtsevel).

in line with international standards, first from a 10-year system (4+4+2) into an 11-year system (5+4+2), and subsequently into a 12-year system (5+4+3). ADB's assistance enabled the government to renew the curriculum, textbooks, instructional materials, as well as pre-service and in-service teacher training programs required for the fundamental change. Most teachers and school principals received training under ADB projects. From 2008 onward, ADB further supported the introduction of international practices to school education in Mongolia, such as teacher policy; policy for information and communication technology (ICT) in education; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education; diversified senior secondary education programs; and career guidance. Almost half of the schools in Mongolia were provided with ICT and STEM education equipment and tools. ADB's support also played a crucial role in developing the education management information system and reforming the school dormitory system. Since 2017, ADB's loan has been supporting the construction and expansion of school buildings to reduce the number of schools operating in two or three shifts in Ulaanbaatar.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

The country's rapid economic growth has increased the demand for higher education and led to the proliferation of higher education institutions. Yet the expansion of the higher education system in Mongolia did not occur together with improvements in the quality and relevance of higher education programs, producing many graduates not ready for work. From 2011 to 2020, ADB's first loan for higher education supported the improvement of the higher education accreditation system in line with international standards and international accreditation of 20 higher education programs. ADB's assistance also extended to (i) the introduction of the Conceiving-Designing-Implementing-Operating (CDIO) standards and methodology to engineering programs at key state universities, (ii) grants to promote partnerships with industry and foreign



**Laser laboratory, National University of Mongolia.** The Higher Education Reform Project enhanced the quality and relevance of higher education programs (photo by Eric Sales).

universities, and (iii) the development of higher education management information system. Under the loan, over 500 management staff,

administrators, and faculty members received training on governance, financing, and management of higher education institutions.



An upgraded car repair and operation workshop in Bayankhongor Polytechnic College. ADB supports reforms in the technical and vocational training and education, helping to develop modern and relevant curricula to ensure responsiveness to labor market demand (photo by Amgalanbayar Dashtsevel).

## TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

After the closure of many TVET institutions attached to state-owned enterprises during the transition period, the number of TVET institutions has gradually increased since 2020. Along with the lack of a demand-driven TVET system, skills mismatch in the labor market has intensified. From 2006 through 2009, a JFPR grant supported the development of a

competency-based curriculum for short-term training courses in close collaboration with employers in the construction sector. Since 2015, ADB lending has assisted the government in reforming the TVET system into a demand-driven and competency-based system, focusing on 15 key occupations in agriculture, construction, and roads and transportation. A complete set of

standards, curriculum, training materials, and assessment tools was developed for 15 key occupations together with over 20 certified facilitators, employers, industry, and professional associations. ADB's assistance also contributed to the establishment of a competency assessment, certification system, and TVET teacher professional development systems.

## CROSS-SECTOR AND INCLUSIVE AGENDA

Schools and kindergartens are part of larger basic infrastructure and service systems. Improving education and training requires approaches that are integrated across sectors. Apart from grants and loans in education, ADB has supported improved water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities and the construction of schools and kindergartens as part of its investment in urban development. ADB also assisted the

government in developing gender policy in education and expanding education and training opportunities for people with disabilities. To support the government's new inclusive education policy agenda, in 2020, ADB approved the project on Support for Inclusive Education financed by the JFPR. The project aims to improve access to and quality of education for boys and girls with disabilities.

## PARTNERSHIPS

ADB has been working closely with development partners in providing assistance to the education sector. In addition to its bilateral development assistance, the Government of Japan has provided \$9.89 million in grant financing for education in Mongolia through JFPR and the Japan Fund for Information and Communication Technology, both managed by ADB. The Government of Japan, through the ADB-Japan Scholarship Program, has also provided an opportunity for more than 140

Mongolians to undertake postgraduate studies in various development-related fields at selected institutions in Asia and the Pacific. With the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), ADB works on the Build for Skills Initiative, supporting workplace-based TVET in infrastructure projects. The TA to support the implementation of Education Sector Medium-Term Development Plan is financed by the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund.

**Mongolia: ADB Operations in Education**  
(As of 31 December 2021)

Approval No.	Project Name	Net Amount (\$ million)	Date Approved	Closing Date
<b>Loans</b>				
1 1507	Education Sector Development Program	6.500	19 Dec 1996	2 Dec 1999
2 1508	Education Sector Development Project	9.000	19 Dec 1996	8 Nov 2002
3 1908	Second Education Development	14.000	6 Aug 2002	15 Jun 2009
4 2238	Third Education Development	13.000	21 Jun 2006	26 Jun 2012
5 2766	Higher Education Reform	20.000	28 Jul 2011	12 Mar 2021
6 3243	Skills for Employment	25.000	16 Dec 2014	31 Aug 2021
7 3594	Sustaining Access to and Quality of Education During Economic Difficulties Project	50.000	20 Nov 2017	31 Dec 2021
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>137.50</b>		
<b>Grants</b>				
1 0125	Education Sector Reform	10.000	21 Nov 2008	6 Mar 2015
2 0158	Education for the Poor–Financial Crisis Response	17.000	18 Sep 2009	18 Aug 2014
3 9044	Information and Communication Technology for Innovating Rural Education (JFICT)	1.000	6 Apr 2004	21 Dec 2007
4 9085	Nonformal Skills Training for Unemployed Youth and Adults (JFPR)	1.000	20 Feb 2006	8 Oct 2010
5 9138	Early Childhood Education for Rural, Nomadic, and Migrant Children (JFPR)	2.890	28 Aug 2009	30 Jun 2015
6 9182	Improving School Dormitory Environment for Primary Students in Western Region (JFPR)	3.000	26 Nov 2015	4 Mar 2020
7 9208	Support for Inclusive Education (JFPR)	2.000	3 Jul 2020	29 Feb 2024
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>36.89</b>		
<b>Technical Assistance</b>				
1 1801	Human Resource Development and Education Reform	0.535	11 Dec 1992	31 Jul 1995
2 2228	Education Development	0.400	9 Dec 1994	31 Mar 2000
3 2659	Restructuring and Staff Rationalization	0.070	7 Oct 1996	31 May 1998
4 2719	Institutional Strengthening in the Education Sector	0.950	19 Dec 1996	31 Aug 2001
5 3174	Education Sector Strategy Study	0.150	12 Mar 1999	28 Feb 2001
6 3351	Second Education Development	0.550	20 Dec 1999	31 Jul 2005
7 3913	Capacity Building for Accounting and Auditing Professionals	0.500	4 Sep 2002	31 May 2005
8 4487	Third Education Development	0.500	16 Dec 2004	20 Sep 2006
9 4803	Development of a Sector-Wide Approach (Swap) in Education	0.150	21 Jun 2006	28 Jan 2010
10 4950	Education Sector Reform	0.600	3 Jul 2007	17 Nov 2009
11 7333	Strengthening Higher and Vocational Education	0.611	21 Aug 2009	20 Oct 2011
12 7571	Reforming Higher Education for a Knowledge Society (JFPR)	0.500	4 Aug 2010	17 May 2013
13 8299	Reforms in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Mongolia (JFPR)	1.000	19 Dec 2012	30 Jun 2015
14 8931	Education Sector Development (JFPR)	1.000	16 Jul 2015	30 Apr 2018
15 9216	Sustaining Access to and Quality of Education during Economic Difficulties (JFPR)	0.800	3 Nov 2016	30 Sep 2019
16 9376	Supporting the Development of an Education Sector Master Plan (JFPR)	0.600	15 Sep 2017	30 Jun 2021
17 9375	Strengthening Systems for Promoting Science, Technology, and Innovation	0.600	15 Sep 2017	31 Jul 2021
18 9663	Research University Sector Development Program	0.800	3 Dec 2018	31 Jan 2022
19 6828	Supporting the Implementation of Education Sector Medium–Term Development Plan	0.050	15 Nov 2021	30 Nov 2023
20 6869	Supporting Post–COVID-19 Recovery in Education Sector	0.500	10 Dec 2021	31 Jan 2024
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>10.866</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>185.256</b>		

COVID-19 = coronavirus disease, JFICT = Japan Fund for Information and Communication Technology, JFPR = Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific.



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[pubsmarketing@adb.org](mailto:pubsmarketing@adb.org)