**THE CIVIL SOCIETY FUND**

**development interventions**

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| *The particular objective of a development intervention is to strengthen civil society organising to promote the fulfilment of rights and equal access to resources and participation and to bring about lasting improvements for poor, marginalised and vulnerable target groups.*  *It is also a particular objective to develop the partners’ role as a catalyst, i.e. as someone reaching out to, mobilising and cooperating with the wider society and other actors. This serves to expand partners’ access to resources and financing, while boosting the effect and sustainability of all their actions.* |

Structure of application text

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| *Please note before writing the application:*   * *NUMBER OF PAGES: The application text must not take up more than 25 pages (Arial, font size 11, line spacing 1.0, margins: top 3 cm, bottom 3 cm, right 2 cm and left 2 cm). Applications exceeding this length will be rejected.* * *LANGUAGE: The application text must have been drawn up in cooperation between the local partner(s) and the applicant Danish organisation. Accordingly, there must be a document available in a language of relevance to the local partner. The actual application, however, can only be submitted to CISU in Danish or English.* * *CONTEXT: Remember that the application will be assessed depending on whether the intervention is to take place in a stable or fragile context. Section 2.4 in the Guidelines sets out what you must remember to explain in your application regarding objective and relevance, partnership, target groups, strategy and cost level.* * *GUIDANCE on submission of applications is available at* [*www.cisu.dk/skemaer*](http://www.cisu.dk/skemaer)*. (The website is presented in Danish, but many documents are also available in English, French and Spanish.)* |

1. **Objective and relevance**

**Objective of the intervention**

The overall objective of the intervention is to provide better school start and better school life for herders’ children in rural Mongolia.

The objective will be achieved through focusing on improving home-based early childhood development/ school preparation and care and by improving the conditions for social-emotional well-being and by extending multifaceted learning opportunities for children accommodated in school dormitories.

**How does the intervention contribute towards strengthening civil society organising that promotes compliance with rights and equal access to resources and participation?**

Mongolia’s 1992 constitution guarantees freedom of association and assembly. In general, citizens are not restricted in their ability to associate and assemble. A multitude of formal and informal non-governmental organizations exist. Since the enactment of the *Law on Non-Governmental Organizations* in 1997 numerous such organizations emerged. The number of registered NGOs is today around 12,000 compared to 600 at the end of 1997. Most NGOs remain focused on single issues and thus do not form broader coalitions or serve as the basis of social movements. Most active NGOs operate within urban settings.

While this is the general situation also acknowledged by *EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2014 - 2017[[1]](#footnote-1)* MAPSSD and its now 62 local branches in rural districts across Mongolia have through the project *Mongolization of Civil Society Development in Rural Mongolia* made significant progress in becoming legitimate organizational expressions of their respective civil societies. The new proposed project will further enhance their capacities to engage with local policy makers, local citizens and other NGOs.

With the current application’s focus on ‘better school start – better school life’ MAPSSD and its local branches take new important steps to work in compliance with a rights-based approach as well as promoting the UN SDG #4 highlighting #4.2 (‘by 2030 ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education’.

**The contribution of the intervention towards bringing about lasting improvements for poor, marginalised and vulnerable target groups.**

Herder’s pre-school children and children in dormitories represent some of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in Mongolia. With 30-50% of the rural population living below the official poverty line most of the targeted children also come from poor households.

Through a combination of a) professional capacity building in early childhood development and in adequate dormitory related socio-emotional, recreational and learning caretaking and support; b) systematic involvement of local administration, school and citizens the intervention aims to develop sustainable approaches for home-based early childhood development/school preparation of 5-year old children and for improving life in dormitories especially for the younger children.

**Socio-economic context**

Mongolia is a landlocked country in Asia bordering Russia to the north and China to the east, south and west. With a population of approximately 3,2 million people living on 1,575,000 square kilometres Mongolia is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world.

Close to 30% of the population living in rural Mongolia, i.e. outside any form of urban setting, engage in nomadic lifestyle with pastoral herding as their main occupation and source of income.

The poverty rate is at 29,4% representing significant regional disparities, with the rural areas struggling with poverty rates between 35%-53%[[2]](#footnote-2).

Following the transition from socialist plan economy to capitalist market economy in the 1990s urban and rural life in Mongolia widely followed two different tracks:

*Urban* and densely populated areas would benefit from the dynamics of market-economy, including the growth in privately provided social, educational and health services partly filling the gaps when the state or the municipality fail to meet demands.

In contrast, rural and sparsely populated *rural areas* would suffer from the dismantling of state owned and/or collectively owned enterprises that during socialism were in charge of financing and organizing e.g. kindergartens, schools and health clinics.

Followed by several *zuuds[[3]](#footnote-3)* over a period of ten years after the turn of the century rural-to-urban migration boomed. Today nearly half of the country’s population lives in the capital Ulaanbaatar - compared to only a third twenty years ago.

Mongolia’s impressive economic growth from around 2009 to 2014 was primarily driven by increase in mineral prices on the global market and related investments in the mining sector. Income on minerals export represent 30% of the Mongolian state budget. Reversely, the economic slow-down after 2014 is driven by falling mineral prices. The overall demand for goods, including agricultural products weakens and those who had made it just above the poverty line, especially in the rural areas, are vulnerable to even small negative socio-economic changes and slip below the poverty line again.

Labour intensive pastoralism dominates work life and income generation in most rural districts outside the *soum* centers. Most pastoralist families move their herds four times a year, following the seasons and the need for a variety of nutritious grazing grounds. School age children will either be left with relatives in the *soum* centres or be enrolled in the *soum* school with boarding facilities.

Differences in economic capacity and thus foundations for collection of tax revenues are substantial across Mongolia. Most government revenues from the mineral and oil sectors are centralized.

A separate earmarking of revenues from the mining sector are collected into the General Local Development Fund, and then redistributed to *aimags* and the capital city according to a formula that includes population, population density, remoteness, size of the territory, development indicators and tax generating capacity

Some mining-related revenues are distributed to local governments through earmarking and local development funds. Twenty percent of domestic VAT payments, 5 percent of mining royalties, 30 percent of petroleum royalties, and budget surpluses of local governments are distributed to local governments.

As *aimags* are not entitled to collect tax they depend entirely on redistribution of national revenues. Although *soum* administrations can collect tax the foundation for tax revenues in most *soums* is weak. Most individual incomes are generated through pastoralism, which for political reasons (herders represent at strong electorate) enjoy tax-exemption. Eventually only registered employees in the public sector and in the more formal private sector are subjects to the 10% tax collection. A recent attempt by the Mongolian parliament to introduce a system of progressive taxation was dropped after nationwide objection and veto by the Mongolian president. Individual taxation follows a 10% flat rate while corporate tax is up to 25%.

The overall situation in rural Mongolia and in especially the poor conditions for financing local development, including the provision of home-based early childhood development/ school preparation modalities for children of pastoralist families and for improving recreational and child development activities in dormitories accommodating pastoralists’ children leaves civil society with primarily one major area relevant to advocacy and mobilizing local communities in having a say in local policy making, i.e. the Local (*Soum)* Development Funds mentioned above. In addition, civil society as well as local administrations may attract external funding from national sponsors and/or international donors.

According to a survey conducted among the 62 local MAPSSD branches as part of the preparation for the proposed intervention there is definitely ‘room for improvement’ when it comes to the procedures and practices applying to the utilisation of Local Development Funds. Only few of the local branches refer to having thorough knowledge about the size and the use of the funds, and only two recall local communities being involved in dialogues with administration and policy makers about how to utilize the funds. Rather, the impression from the survey is that the Local Development Funds are distributed behind closed doors and often for purposes in discrepancy with the regulations. Civil society involvement in monitoring of and advocating for efficient use of Local Development Funds is very high on the civil society agenda in rural Mongolia.

As will be unfolded in the following sections local policy makers and administrations have in principle a positive position towards involving the civil society and their active organizations in policy making and in identifying the most efficient ways of utilizing the local development funds. And, with the ‘Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030’ and the ‘Law of Mongolia on Development Policy Planning’ civil society have strong tools in campaigning for and keeping politicians and administrations accountable.

**Political and civil society context**

The socialist one-party regime was peacefully replaced by multi-party democracy in 1990. Since then Mongolia has held six national and local parliamentary and five presidential elections all monitored and recognized by international observers as fair and free. Two parties, the Mongolian People’s Party and the Democratic Party, are dominating the political landscape and are the main contenders to govern at national and local levels. Although elections are recognized as fair and free, partisan politics are increasingly pestering public affairs and in particular public administration.

Following every election since 1996 public servants at all levels and in all sectors are replaced in vast numbers widely according to party lines. Mongolian media is in principle free but often linked to political parties or influential players in the Mongolian economy. Corruption and other irregularities in public administration are widespread though anti-corruption measures and initiatives have increased in recent years.

While voter turnout was impressive during the first national and local elections in 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2004 ranging from 95,6% in 1992 and 81,84% in 2004, the elections in 2008 and 2012 experienced a drop to around 65-67%. Voter turnout at local elections deviated in most cases only slightly from that of national elections.

During the national elections in June 2016 voter turnout increased to 73,6%. However, in all 56 areas where MAPSSD local branches campaigned for people participating in elections the turnout was above 80% with a remarkable increase among young voters.

Mongolia’s 1992 constitution guarantees freedom of association and assembly. In general, citizens are not restricted in their ability to associate and assemble. In fact, protests near the Government Palace and in front of political-party buildings are quite common. A multitude of formal and informal non-governmental organizations exist. These range from the comparatively highly organized *nutag councils* (*nutag =* homeland, place of origin), which represent particular regions and provinces in debates in the capital and the political sphere more broadly, to more informal and issue-specific organizations, as well as to NGOs that appear as an interest group but in practice often represent only a single person.

Since the enactment of the *Law on Non-Governmental Organizations* in 1997 numerous such organizations emerged. The number of registered NGOs is today around 12,000 compared to 600 at the end of 1997. Most NGOs remain very focused on specific issues and thus do not form broader coalitions or serve as the basis of social movements. Some sources claim that actually only about 10% of the NGOs are active on a regular basis. Their impact on political decision-making consequently remains limited, though it is not legally restricted in any way. This has made many of them susceptible to narrow-interest-based agitation, and to allegations of engaging in “protest-for-hire.[[4]](#footnote-4)”

The above relatively negative presentation of the NGO ‘sector’ in Mongolia does not, however, apply to the now 62 local branches of MAPSSD, the Mongolian partner to this application. All local branches are membership-based, and their main focus is to engage the local community in the broadest possible debates and actions related to local development, meaning that actions are taken only on the basis of clear and strong community support. Secondly, all local branches work as the key facilitator of cooperation among all local NGOs, i.e. newly established single-issue NGOs as well the more traditional organizations that have been in existence also before 1990. Through such interventions the local MAPSSD branches support efficient and well-coordinated collaboration with local policy and administration bodies and they have a clear role as key catalysts of civil society development.

Although the legislative framework is in place for civil society organizations and that the registration procedure for NGOs is relatively easy there is very little practical and/or financial governmental support for their regular operation and activities. One exception is the so-called *Citizens’ Halls* established by Mongolian president initiative in 2009. *Citizens’ Halls* are now found in the capital in the 21 *aimag* centres*.* In principle, *Citizens’ Halls* enable policy makers to engage in direct debates with citizens and especially civil society organizations. In practice, however, they remain to prove their ability to foster a real difference in engaging civil society in major policy making.

At *soum* level there are no *Citizen’s Halls*, however, with smaller communities where ‘everybody-knows-everybody’ it has proven easier to engage the duty bearers such as policy makers and local administration in fruitful dialogue and cooperation with community members. MAPSSD local branches have throughout 2015-2018 proved the potentials of such dialogue and collaboration to the extent that many of the local branches have been directly asked and/or engaged by the local administration to offer training courses to their local communities on what it actually means to be a rights holder and an active citizen and what civil society engagement in policy making is all about.

Most NGOs operating rely on international funding or individual donations from well-off Mongolians. The vast majority of NGOs are located and operating in urban areas (primarily in the capital) and most are non-member-based organizations. Only 10-23% (figures vary according to sources) are having a rural address and area of operation, most of which are in the provincial (*aimag)* centres.

Mongolian civil society organizations are not only struggling with funding, they are also facing fundamental challenges in transforming the Western rooted concepts of civil society and civil society organization. In the wake of societal transition from 1990 onwards the main inspiration, financial and practical support to establishing civil society organizations came from various foundations in Western Europe and USA. While their support was welcomed – particularly by the Mongolian urban cosmopolitan elite - and influential in many ways, the concepts pushed forward often ignored the particularities of social life and relationships in Mongolia, not least in rural Mongolia, where remoteness, isolation, small population scattered over vast territory, lack of transport and communication infrastructure and nomadic lifestyle establishes conditions for social life and relationships fundamentally different from those prevailing in urban, highly modern and sedentary societies.

With its 62 local membership-based branches representing all *aimags* (provinces) and of which 61 are operating at *soum* level, MAPSSD is probably the only civil society organization in Mongolia with a mission to support capacity building in rural communities for long-term civil society development and doing so by simultaneously developing rural-Mongolia-adequate approaches to advocacy, CSO-organization, communication and collaboration with local citizens as well as the local policy/administration bodies, hence the previous successful CISU-supported project ‘*Mongolization* of civil society development in rural Mongolia.

**Education and schools in rural Mongolia**

Since decades under socialism when education was a top priority, schooling and education holds a strong position in the Mongolian society. After a deep decline in capacity and quality during the first 10-15 years following the transition in 1990 the education sector is gradually improving. Today the literacy rate in Mongolia is above 98%. Over the last 15 years the education budget has represented between 4,1% and 8,9% of GDP.

Mongolia has a 5-4-2 formal education structure. Primary school has an official entry age of six and a duration of five grades. Secondary school is divided into two cycles: lower secondary consists of grades 6 - 9, and upper secondary consists of grades 10 - 11. In principle, primary and secondary school are free and primary and lower secondary school are compulsory. Students sit for examinations for the Primary Education Certificate at the end of grade 5, the Certificate of Basic Education at the end of grade 9, and the school leaving certificate at the end of grade 11.

The school year for primary grades lasts 34 school weeks; for lower secondary it lasts 35 weeks; and for upper secondary it lasts 36 weeks. The school year typically begins in September.

Schools in rural Mongolia are by requirement boarding schools accommodating children of pastoralist families. With 30%-50% of the rural population living below the poverty line the boarding facilities are home to a great number of pupils – age 6 to 15 – from vulnerable and marginalized backgrounds.

During socialism herders’ and farmers’ collectives (*negdels)* were – within strict national regulations - responsible for financing and operating kindergartens and schools, including the latter’s boarding facilities. Since 1990 schools operate primarily on a state financing scheme, while the payment for boarding facilities is based on a mix of state financing, parental contributions and various donations from national as well as international sources.

Where kindergartens do exist in *soum* (village) centers they also operate on contributions from various sources as is the case for dormitories. Kindergartens do not – and should not - offer boarding and thus herder’s children are generally excluded from early childhood development/ school preparation.

Pastoralist families (nomadic herders) represent around 30% of Mongolia’s population.

These families move several times a year in search for the right pastures for their livestock, and they are faced with tough decisions regarding sending their children to school – splitting up the family or delaying enrolment in school.

Young children of pastoralist families would need to go to a boarding school in the *soum* (village) centre or stay with relatives in the centre. Long distances and harsh winters exclude daily commuting from the family’s *ger* camp (*ger* = traditional Mongolian dwelling for pastoralists).

Being separated from his/her family at the age of six presents significant socio-emotional stress to any child. Caretaking, including dealing with socio-emotional stress, supervising homework and wider learning of dormitory children, not least the youngest, require adequate knowledge and skills. Most dormitory teachers were never provided with corresponding training.

Recreational and development activities in dormitories are in most cases scarce, and non-formal or extra-curricular activities for children mostly start from age 10, leaving many of the educational needs of lower-primary grade children unmet.

Most rural children enrol in school without adequate preschool preparation, which means they often face learning difficulties in school. Eighty percent of school dropout cases of children aged 6-14 occur in rural areas, with the majority of those in primary grades.

The importance of early childhood care and education is indisputable. *Global Partnership for Education* emphasize that

* Delivering quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) is one of the most critical and cost-effective investments a country can make.
* For the first time, the Sustainable Development Goals include a target for ECCE (SDG 4.2) to ensure that children have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education[[5]](#footnote-5).

Over the last 10-15 years a few projects supported by international donors have piloted different modalities for providing pre-school learning opportunities for herders’ children. For example, UNICEF piloted a mobile *ger*-kindergarten in one *aimag* (province), and the World Bank in collaboration with Save the Children/Japan and JICA recently implemented a home-based school preparation project in 30 *soums.* While the UNICEF concept is to provide temporary access during the summer season to kindergarten activities accommodated in a *ger*, the World Bank project trained parents to support their 5-year old children and parents were provided with a toolbox loaded with various learning materials and ideas for learning activities.

Both projects have reached a good number of nomadic pre-school children and their families (figures in reports vary from a total of 4000 to 6000 pre-school children over a ten-year period). Although successful in reaching their respective target groups both projects have yet to materialize outside their separate project organizations and related – relatively high and externally funded - budget schemes.

CICED and its Mongolian partner MAPSSD are well informed about the aforementioned and efforts to provide early childhood education to nomadic families and will reflect experiences from the two projects in the proposed intervention. We will, however, aim for modalities that are entirely rooted in existing structures, and for a cost scheme allowing for long-term sustainability and replication across Mongolia with no or very limited external financial donor support.

Two MAPSSD board members have in different ways been involved as resource persons in both projects. The planned CICED-MAPSSD intervention will, of course, draw on any relevant experiences and ideas emerging from those projects.

As rural-urban migrating is an ongoing challenge in Mongolia it should be noticed that quality education is at the very core of sustainability and resilience of rural communities. From more than 25 years of experience working with school development in rural Mongolia we know that the quality of education is a key factor influencing migration. When educational opportunities in rural schools are of good quality parents prefer to remain in rural settings.

1. **Partnership/partners**

**The Danish organisation**

CICED was established in November 2010. CICED has, however, under the name Centre for International Cooperation in Educational Development (a centre under Danmarks Lærerhøjskole, now Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitetsskole, CVU København & Nordsjælland and University College UCC) more 26+ years of experience as a main partner to Danida providing technical assistance and program management in education in Afghanistan, China, Eritrea, India, Kenya, Mongolia, Nepal, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia.

The predecessor to CICED, working within the framework of Danmarks Lærerhøjskole and under contract with DANIDA was in the 1990s the sole responsible institution for providing technical assistance to [the] *Danish Support to Primary and Secondary School Reform in Mongolia,* a program that also focused heavily on supporting education in rural Mongolia. As such key members of CICED board have more than 26 years of experience working in Mongolia and in rural areas. The president of MAPSSD and its secretary general as well as two other board members were extensively involved in the Danish-Mongolian collaboration in the 1990s.

Since 2000 CICED (the centre) was the key Danish actor (in partnership with Danish-Mongolian Society) in managing the *Rural School Development Project* in Mongolia. As such CICED was designing, coordinating and monitoring the project and providing all technical assistance. MAPSSD was the Mongolian partner to the *Rural School Development Project.*

CICED has – under its previous legal frameworks- over the years managed projects and programs for more than 130 million DKK, all to respective donors’ (primarily DANDIA) full satisfaction.

CICED’s board represents a range of experiences and capacities related to all cycles of project management and efficient budget administration. Currently, CICED has 112 members. The main share of ongoing work is undertaken by the board, primarily on a voluntary basis. The CICED board includes members with long-standing experience and thorough theoretical and practical knowledge in pedagogy, child-centred teaching-learning methods, early childhood development, curriculum and teaching-learning materials development as well as small-to-large scale educational change and development.

The board’s three-person taskforce on this planned intervention will include 1) the vice-chairman who since 1992 has coordinated all DANIDA and CISU funded support to education in Mongolia, 2) the chairman who in addition to more than two decades of collaboration with partners in Mongolia was for over 10 years the director of education, social services and culture, including early childhood development in a larger Danish municipality (Hillerød), and a member who is currently the BUPL adviser on international projects on early childhood development.

With the projects *Civil Society Development in Mongolia* and *Mongolization of Civil Society Development in Rural Mongolia* CICED engaged in capacity building of civil society organizations and supporting such organizations’ ability to mobilize their local communities in influencing local and regional policy making and thus promoting advocacy related to local communities’ particular interests, ideas and needs. This particular Mongolian experience has inspired CICED to engage in ongoing debates on the diversity of civil society concepts and related development strategies.

Since 2016 the UN Sustainable Development Goals are systematically incorporated into all CICED project interventions.

CICED is a member of *CISU, Dansk Forum for Mikrofinans, Globalt Fokus, Global Nyt*, *Globale Skolepartnerskaber* and *Verdens Bedste Nyheder.*

**The Mongolian partner organisation**

*Mongolian Association of Primary and Secondary School Development/MAPSSD* was established in 1999 by key actors involved in the DANIDA financed *Danish Support to Primary and Secondary School Reform in Mongolia*.

MAPSSD was the sole Mongolian partner to the very successful *Rural School Development Project* 2000-2010 implemented in collaboration with Danish-Mongolian Society and CICED.

The *Rural School Development Project* demonstrated MAPSSD’s capacity to support school development and school-community development in multiple ways that would thoroughly reflect the diversity of local conditions and requirements across Mongolia. Eighty schools in as many remote rural districts (*soums)* were involved in the project. At the beginning of the project all participating schools were recording relatively poor performance. When the project closed all schools were in the regional top-five performing schools, and several of them became model-schools for their respective provinces (*aimags).* Critical to the success was MAPSSD ability to support new and dynamic collaboration between the schools and parents and the local community at large.

Based on the experiences of the *Rural School Development Project*, MAPSSD decided to add civil society development in rural Mongolia to its core mission. Of the original 80 local schools/ communities engaged in *Rural School Development Project* 57 communities representing all provinces in Mongolia decided to establish local branches of MAPSSD.

Following a pilot-project (with CICED) 2011-2013, MAPSSD engaged in the project *Mongolization of Civil Society Development in Rural Mongolia.* That project ended in May 2018 with a total of 62 local branches and demonstrated MAPPSD’s capacity to support the development of organizational forms, working and communication methods including very efficient advocacy strategies based on specific local contexts as well as the general conditions constituting civil society development in nomadic settings.

MAPSSD and its local branches have a proven record in efficient advocacy work: a) all branches have regular meetings with local administrations and policy makers representing local duty bearers; b) most branches have - with support from the local administration - organized workshops and seminars on civil society involvement in policy making; c) all branches succeeded in obtaining financial support from the local administration for a variety of activities, e.g. new culture clubs and sport activities for children, youth and adults respectively, local branches extended participation in project regional workshops where the project only covered 50% of the costs, record high turn-out at local and national elections.

Furthermore, all local MAPSSD branches are initiators and organizers of monthly coordination meetings between all local NGOs and local administration/policy makers in their respective areas.

MAPSSD is the only NGO in Mongolia with a national outreach through its currently 62 membership based local branches and with an aim to support an overall strengthening of civil society development in rural Mongolia, where mobile pastoralism (nomadic life) prevails, and thus represents challenges significantly different from sedentary (be it urban or rural/farming) communities. The national outreach and centrally supported capacity building, as well as national and regional coordination and exchange of experiences and ideas are considered critical in Mongolia with extremely low population density and restricted access in rural communities to new knowledge and ideas. MAPSSD considers a national organization and efficiently coordinated network of local organizations imperative for civil society development in rural areas to flourish. Efficient national wide coordination, regular contact and annual possibilities for face-to-face exchanges are considered necessary to break the multi-dimensional isolation emerging from the ‘tyranny of geography’.

MAPSSD board and staff represent a unique combination of excellent professional, academic and practical capacity and experiences in working with rural communities across Mongolia. They hold very strong records in collaborating with Mongolian government and public administration representing national duty bearers, as well as international donors, UN agencies and other international institutions and organizations. The MAPSSD board and staff represent a successfully documented capacity to manage organizations, projects and other activities of substantial size and complexity.

The president of MAPSSD is a former director of the National Institute of In-Service Teacher Training, a 10-year serving rector of Mongolia State University of Education, vice-president of the Academy of Science and chairman of the academy’s committee on education and social affairs. He is currently the director of a new Research Centre at the Mongolian State University of Education. He has been the coordinator of all Danish-Mongolian collaboration in education since 1992. The secretary general of MAPSSD has been with the Danish-Mongolian collaboration since 1998 and has thorough knowledge and experience in collaboration with rural schools and communities. Two other board members are former directors of province (*aimag)* education and culture centres in charge of – among other things – supervising and monitoring schools, early childhood activities and dormitories in their respective *aimags.* They have also been involved in CICED-MAPSSD collaboration since the 1990s. The MAPSSD president and one of the former education-centre directors conducted a major study on the challenges related to lowering the school entry age to six, including challenges related to the need for improving dormitory life especially for the younger children of pastoralist families.

All coordination committees of the 62 MAPSSD local branches include school directors, primary school teachers, and parents of pastoralist households. With their proven record of engaging local communities as rights holders in dialogue, advocacy work and collaboration with local administrations (duty bearers) and their professional capacity in education and school-parent collaboration they are very well prepared to implement the intervention outlined in this application.

Embedded in many years of successful collaboration the relations between the partners are already quite strong. The intervention applied for will add new dimensions (home-based early childhood development/ school preparation and child development within dormitory frameworks) to the existing wide range of joint experiences.

**Previous experiences and the design of the proposed intervention**

The intervention builds on previous collaboration between CICED and MAPSSD. While the new project pursues new objectives and benefit new target groups it is rooted in experiences and capacities built during previous interventions, i.e. *Mongolization of Civil Society Development in Rural Mongolia 20014-2018* and *Rural School Development Project 2000-2010.*

The former intervention (2014-2018) supported the 62 local MAPSSD branches to become legitimate representations of their respective local communities and schools, and highly recognized by local administrations and policy makers for their role as advocacy groups, socio-cultural activity initiators, coordinators of local CSO engagements and thus as main catalysts in enhancing civil society development in their respective areas. The latter (2000-2010) demonstrated the CICED-MAPSSD capacity to develop and implement interventions improving the quality of primary and secondary schooling in rural areas with a particular emphasis on the value of intensive school-community collaboration.

The design of the new intervention incorporates the most successful elements of former collaborations, i.e. elements/activities/procedures that have proven critical to smooth and efficient implementation of the interventions.

* A national project kick-off conference for all local branches where the project is thoroughly introduced and, on that basis, all local branches draft their own actions plans that are eventually discussed, adjusted and approved by their constituencies upon return from the national kick-off conference. Local actions plans are submitted to MAPSSD management who gives feedback and advice for improvements where necessary. Through this procedure all relevant local social actors are involved in shaping and fine-tuning the intervention that will require local adaptation and further development in order to be truly successful and sustainable.
* Regular, i.e. 2-3 times/month monitoring of project progress via phone calls from/to MAPSSD management.
* Follow-up visits by MAPSSD management to selected local branches. Conditions and capacities vary across the 62 branches and some are sometimes in need for more intensive and on-location support and supervision.
* Annual regional project workshops with. Representatives from all local branches. The regional workshops have for more than 15 years proved to be the backbone of efficient project implementation. At the regional workshops local branches get new inspiration from MAPSSD management and CICED partner, share experiences and ideas. In a country of Mongolia’s size and poor infrastructure domestic traveling for learning from others is not something happening on a regular basis. These annual face-to-face meetings have proven to be very crucial for keeping project momentum and for continuously adjusting and thus optimizing the overall project implementation.
* Half-yearly progress reports from all local branches to MAPSSD management that gives feedback either in writing or by phone.
* Quarterly newsletters sharing useful experiences and new ideas across the local branches and their communities.
* Regular updating of joint web-page where all local branches can share experiences and ideas.

**The roles and areas of responsibility of the partners**

The distribution of roles and responsibilities among the partners will follow a set-up that has proved its efficiency in several joint projects throughout many years of collaboration.

CICED will carry the overall responsibility for project monitoring and management including budget monitoring and reporting to CISU according to all applicable guidelines and regulations.

CICED will make Danish as well as international knowledge and experiences related to early childhood development available to MAPSSD and its local branches through presentations at national conferences, regional workshops and through contributions to project newsletters and other publications.

CICED project monitoring will include regular (monthly and whenever needed) online-meetings with MAPSSD management and annual field visits to selected branches including participation in all regional workshops.

The MAPSSD board will be in charge of all ongoing implementation activities in Mongolia including project budget and progress management and monitoring. MAPPSD board will organise the national kick-off conference, facilitate regional workshops, organize the closing national advocacy seminar as well as the planned training of home-based school preparation teachers and the dormitory teachers.

The MAPSSD board will publish project newsletters and all other materials to be produced and distributed during the project, including regular update of its website containing also earmarked space for each of the local branches, collect progress reports from all 62 local branches and on that basis draft the annual progress report.

MAPSSD board will be in charge of collecting and sharing experiences and ideas from other relevant early childhood and dormitory improvement interventions conducted in Mongolia with national and/or international support.

MAPPSD board will ensure sharing of experience and ideas (advocacy) from the intervention with national and regional stakeholders (Ministry of Education, *aimag* education and culture centres, Great State Khural Standing Committee on Education and Social Affairs) as well as with international actors engaged in early childhood development and dormitory life improvement in Mongolia.

MAPSSD local branch coordination committees (LBCC) will be responsible for drafting, implementing and managing local action plans reflecting the objectives and activity framework of the project. MAPSSD LBCC will ensure the closest possible collaboration with local administration and policy makers as well as with schools and dormitories and ensure the widest possible involvement of target households in the continuous review of the efficiency of the project interventions. MAPSSD LBCC will ensure proper participation in the national kick-off conference, the regional workshops and the closing seminar as well as in the planned training sessions for facilitators and dormitory teachers.

**Partners acting as a catalyst**

The MAPSSD branches role as catalyst will involve – and extend already existing - collaboration with local administrative and political authorities, local schools and early childhood education institutions, other local civil society organizations, local businesses and the community at large with a strong focus on nomadic families. Every local branch has their own page on MAPSSD website where experiences and ideas are shared with the wider society. MAPSSD branches coordinate monthly meetings with other CSOs and local administration and they operate messaging systems based on the use of mobile phone networks. Following successful dissemination practices from previous interventions the local branches will share experiences and ideas with neighbouring districts. Teachers and school directors that are members of the MAPSSD branch coordination committees will share ideas and experiences of the intervention during *aimag* (province) annual education conferences with participation of all schools and early childhood education institutions.

The catalyst role of MAPSSD national management will engage distribution of project newsletters and annual project progress booklets to relevant national and provincial authorities and policy makers as well as to other CSOs and to donors engaged in early childhood education and primary education. Further, MAPSSD national management will utilize its strong will share project experience and ideas through its strong relationship with educational institutions responsible for training early childhood education teachers and primary school teachers. The planned national advocacy seminar at the end of the project engaging key representatives of all relevant national and international stakeholders will be a significant catalyst activity.

Through campaigning for local development fund reallocations and regular national funding the combined catalyst efforts of MAPSSD national management and its local branches will aim to raise sustainable budgetary support for home-based early childhood education/school preparation as well as improved dormitory life for the youngest children.

As outlined above the catalyst dimension in the Mongolian context is significant: In Mongolia the proposed project will invite for collaboration with actors in the field of home-based early childhood development/ school preparation and support for improved of dormitory life, i.e., local administrations, *aimag* education and culture centres, pastoralist households, herders’ organisation, international donors (e.g. World Bank, UNICEF, World Vision, Save the Children).

In Denmark the proposed intervention will invite for sharing of experiences and knowledge about innovative ways to support early childhood development in non-institutional settings in general and home-based school preparation in particular. BUPL has stated its interest in learning from the experiences of the proposed intervention and CICED assumes project experiences will be of interest to other CSOs working in early childhood development, and that it would also provide useful insights to be utilized in other CICED projects in e.g. Bolivia (in the pipeline), Nepal (ongoing) and in India (Tibetans-in-Exile).

1. **The target groups**

The proposed intervention has two primary target groups and four secondary target groups.

The primary and direct target groups are:

1. 5-year old children of herders’ families and their parents in 62 rural districts (*soums).* According to collated data there will annually for the next 3-4 years be 10,000+ five-year old children of which approximately 30% are estimated to come from herder families, i.e. 3000+ children
2. Children accommodated in dormitories covered by the 62 local MAPSSD branches. According to collected data the dormitories annually accommodate a total of 3000+ children from herders’ families.

Statistics show that there is close to a 50-50 gender balance for both target groups.

The secondary (both direct and indirect) target groups are:

1. Primary teachers/kindergarten teachers/local administration and local branch coordination committee members engaged in providing support and guidance for parents of 5-year old children. A total of 120+ teachers, primarily female.
2. Dormitory teachers in charge of improving the socio-emotional conditions and general well-being and learning activities for dormitory children. A total of 60+ teachers, primarily female.
3. Parents of pre-school children to receiving support and guidance in hope to improve focused home-based learning activities for their pre-school children. As education is valued highly by women and men alike, and as most families with pre-school age children have finished at least the mandatory 9-year school cycle and considering the tradition of task-sharing in Mongolian herder families, it is assumed that both mothers and fathers will be equally involved in the home-based school preparation activities. Approximately 3000+ herder families.
4. Local MAPSSD branch members and local administration benefiting from involvement in capacity building conference, seminar and workshops and ongoing engagement in developing innovative early childhood care and education models and strategies. MAPSSD local branch coordination committees have in total 400+ members, around 70% female.

The partners have more than two decades of proven capacity working for better education for the rural populations in Mongolia and have for nearly twenty years successfully campaigned for efficient school-community collaboration. The MAPSSD local branches have a strong relationship with herders of their respective communities. All branch coordination committees have members with herder backgrounds.

1. **Strategy and expected results**

**Overall objective:**

* Herder’s children are well prepared for school and dormitory life is improved

Indicators:

* Majority of herder’s children are engaged in homebased early childhood education/school preparation
* Schools and parents report positive change in dormitory life

**Immediate objectives:**

1. By September 2022 all soums in MAPSSD local branch areas have introduced home-based homebased early childhood development/ school preparation for herders’ children

Indicators:

* + 2000+ five-year old children of herder families have been engaged in homebased early childhood/school preparatory activities

1. By December 2021 the social conditions and cultural learning options for children in dormitories improved

Indicators:

* 80% of local branches reporting improved social, cultural and learning conditions for the dormitory children in their local school
* 80% of parents reporting on improved life at dormitories for their children compared to baseline study done at beginning of project

1. By September 2022 MAPSSD and all 62 local branches have capacity to efficiently advocate for political and financial support to home-based early childhood development/ school preparation l preparation activities for herders’ children and for improving conditions at school dormitories

Indicators:

* + Funding available for home-based early childhood development/ school preparation for herders’ children and for socio-cultural and extra-curricular activities for dormitory children in 80% of the rural districts where the project is implemented, i.e., 49-50 rural districts

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| **Immediate objective 1:**  By September 2022 all soums in MAPSSD local branch areas have introduced home-based early childhood development/school preparation for herders’ children. | |
| **Outputs / activities** | **Indicators** |
| **Output 1.1** By August 2020 the all 62 participating local communities have trained facilitators to support the home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities, and plans and materials for the intervention are ready. | Training materials exist and training courses conducted |
| October 2019. Kick-off conference, introduction to home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities. Local branches drafting project implementation action plans. | Conference announced. List of participants. Action plans drafted. |
| October 2019 – July 2020. Identification and procurement of existing and production of new learning materials. | Materials procured/produced and distributed. |
| November 2019 – May 2020. Training of home-based early childhood development/ school preparation facilitators. | List of trainees. Certificates of completed training. |
| December 2019-July 2020. Meetings/advocacy work with local administration, schools and community to ensure support, including funding for the intervention. | List of meetings and meeting participants. Reports on outcomes. |
| December 2019-June 2020. Identification of herders with 5-year old children to start school September 2020. Agreements with parents to engage in the home-based school preparation activity. | List of herders’ agreeing to engage. |
| July-August 2020. Three regional workshops involving representatives from all 62 local branches, sharing of experiences and ideas on the preparation for the first year piloting early home-based early childhood development/ school preparation | List of workshop participants. Reports on outcomes of three workshops. |
| **Output 1.2** By August 2021 all 62 local branches have conducted the first pilot on home-based early childhood development/ school preparation involving min. 50% of the target group. | Reports on pilot from each local branch. List of participating families. |
| September 2020-June 2021. Each of 62 local branches implement/pilot their first year of home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities. | Implementation plans. First year progress reports. |
| June-July 2021. Survey to systematize the experiences and emerging ideas from the first year of the intervention. | Survey conducted and data analysed. Report. |
| July-August 2021. Three regional workshops involving representatives from all 62 local branches, sharing of experiences and ideas emerging from the first year of implementing the home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities. Adjustment of plans for the second year of implementation. | List of workshop participants. Reports on outcomes of three workshops. Collation of revised plans for second year of implementation. |
| **Output 1.3** By August 2022 up to 80% of herder families with 5 year old children in the 62 communities have been involved in home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities. | List of families involved compared with the overall number of herder families with 5 year old children in school year 2022-2023. |
| December 2020-June 2021. Identification of herders with 5-year old children to start school September 2020. Agreements with parents to engage in the home-based school preparation activity. | List of participating families. |
| September 2021-June 2022. Each of 62 local branches implement/pilot their second year of home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities. | Implementation plans. |
| June-July 2022. Survey to systematize the experiences and emerging ideas from the second year of the intervention. | Survey completed and analysed. Report. |
| July-August 2022. Three regional workshops involving representatives from all 62 local branches, sharing of experiences and ideas emerging from the first year of implementing the home-based early childhood development/school preparation activities. Adjustment of plans for the continued post-project implementation. Identification of recommendations for national advocacy seminar. | List of workshop participants. Reports on outcomes of three workshops. Collation of revised plans for third year of implementation. |
| **Immediate objective 2:**  By September 2022 the social conditions and cultural learning options for children in dormitories improved | |
| **Output 2.1** By August 2020 the all 62 participating local communities have dormitory teachers trained in supporting socio-emotional well-being and organizing extra-curricular activities at school dormitories | Training materials exist, and training courses conducted. Availability of training materials and training programs, and list of participants in training courses. |
| October 2019. Kick-off conference, introduction to better socio-emotional conditions and extra-curricular activities in dormitories. Local branches drafting project implementation action plans. | Conference announced. List of participants. Action plans drafted. |
| November 2019 – May 2020. Training of dormitory teachers. | List of trainees. Certificates of completed training. |
| October 2019 – July 2020. Situation analysis of conditions in dormitories. | Analysis available. Report with recommendations for action. |
| December 2019-July 2020. Meetings/advocacy work with local administration, schools and community to ensure support, including funding for improved dormitory conditions. | List of meetings and meeting participants. Reports on outcome. |
| July-August 2020. Three regional workshops involving representatives from all 62 local branches, sharing of experiences and ideas on improving conditions in dormitories. | List of workshop participants. Reports on outcomes of three workshops. Collation of revised plans for third year of implementation. |
| **Output 2.2** By December 2021 all involved dormitories have improved socio-emotional support and better socio-cultural and extra-curricular learning conditions. | Survey including parents’ opinion on situation in dormitories clearly show improvements. Report. |
| August-September 2020. Introduction of first organizational and physical changes to improve dormitory conditions. | Reports on interventions undertaken. |
| September 2020-June 2021. Implementation of new extra-curricular and other socio-cultural activities to improve children’s lives in dormitories. | Reports on interventions undertaken. |
| June – July 2021. Survey among children and parents about the changes in dormitories. | Survey done. Report. |
| July-August 2021. Three regional workshops involving representatives from all 62 local branches, sharing of experiences and ideas on improving conditions in dormitories and drafting plans on how further improve. | List of workshop participants. Reports on outcomes of three workshops. Collation of revised plans for third year of implementation. |
| September – December 2021. Meetings/advocacy work with local administration, schools and community to ensure support, including continued funding for improved dormitory conditions. | List of meetings and meeting participants. Reports on outcome. |
| **Immediate objective 3:**  By September 2022 MAPSSD and all 62 local branches have capacity to efficiently advocate for political and financial support to home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities for herders’ children and for improving conditions at school dormitories | |
| **Output 3.1** By September 2020 half of the involved communities have raised funding for home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities and additional funding for improving dormitory conditions. | List of meetings and participants. Data on achieved additional funding. |
| October 2019. Kick-off conference, training in advocacy work for funding and fund raising, identification of additional funding options. Local branches drafting advocacy plans. | Conference announced. List of participants. Advocacy plans drafted. |
| November 2019-June 2020 Advocacy campaigning, meetings with local administrations, communities and other stakeholders ensuring funding for the two targeted interventions. | List of meetings and meeting participants. Reports on outcome. |
| July-August 2020. Three regional workshops with representatives from all 62 branches sharing experiences and ideas on advocacy campaigning for funding of the two interventions and drafting new advocacy action plans. | List of workshop participants. Reports on outcomes of three workshops. Collation of revised plans for second year of advocacy work. |
| **Output 3.2** By June 2022 80% of the involved communities are committed to continued additional funding for home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activities and improvement of dormitory conditions | List of meetings and participants. Data on additional funding. Policy declarations/agreements on continued funding. |
| September 2020-June 2022. Continued and intensified advocacy campaigning with local administrations and communities, regional authorities and national stakeholders to ensure funding for sustainable funding of home-based early childhood development/ school preparation and dormitory life improvement. | List of meetings and meeting participants. Reports on outcome. |
| July-August 2021. Three regional workshops with representatives from all 62 branches sharing experiences and ideas on advocacy campaigning for funding of the two interventions and drafting new advocacy action plans. | List of workshop participants. Reports on outcomes of three workshops. Collation of revised plans for third year of advocacy work. |
| **Output 3.3** By September 2022 MAPSSD has organized a national seminar on home-based early childhood development/ school preparation and dormitory conditions for herder’s children with the participation of national and provincial stakeholders and other interested parties. | Seminar held. list of seminar participants, seminar program. Report. |
| March-June 2022. Survey on outcomes of advocacy campaigning as key part of the preparation for the regional workshops July-August 2022 that will be critical for the preparation for the project closing national advocacy seminar in September 2022. | Survey. Report with list of recommendations. |
| July-August 2022. Three regional workshops with representatives from all 62 branches taking stock of the experiences and possible new ideas for advocacy work on sustainable funding for the home-based early childhood development/ school preparation activity and the support for a good dormitory life for herders’ children. | List of workshop participants. Reports on outcomes of three workshops with emphasis on recommendations for the advocacy seminar. |
| September 2022. National advocacy seminar on experiences and recommendations for nation-wide support for home-based early childhood development/ school preparation and good dormitory life for herders’ children. | Seminar held. list of seminar participants, seminar program. Report. |

**Relationship to previous interventions:**

As stated earlier the intervention builds on previous collaboration between CICED and MAPSSD. While the new proposed intervention pursues new objectives and benefit new target groups it is rooted in experiences and capacities built during previous successful interventions, i.e. *Mongolization of Civil Society Development in Rural Mongolia 20014-2018* and *Rural School Development Project 2000-2010*.

The former intervention (2014-2018) supported the 62 local MAPSSD branches to become legitimate representations of their respective local communities and schools, and highly recognized by local administrations and policy makers for their role as advocacy groups, socio-cultural activity initiators and organizers. The latter (2000-201) demonstrated the CICED-MAPSSD capacity to develop and implement interventions improving the quality of primary and secondary schooling in rural areas with a particular emphasis on the value of intensive school-community collaboration.

The design of the new intervention incorporates the most successful elements of former collaborations, i.e. elements/activities/procedures that have proven crucial to smooth and efficient implementation of the interventions. For more details please refer see section 2, page 11 on ‘Previous experiences and the design of the proposed intervention’.

**The interlinkage and balance between capacity development, advocacy and possible strategic deliveries (the Development Triangle) – Advocacy plan**

The previous project demonstrated that, when the appropriate strategic deliveries are made available together with adequate capacity building activities and efficient advocacy work MAPSSD and its local branches are highly capable of achieving the defined objectives and deliver the planned outputs. The local branches achieved strong legitimacy and support from their respective communities and through strong advocacy work they succeeded in attracting funding from the local administration to numerous socio-cultural activities benefiting the local population and in particularly the youth. Through earlier interventions focussing on professional capacity building among local teachers MAPSSD has proven capable of significantly improving the quality of education in rural schools.

The *capacity building* in the project thus has three focus areas:

* Capacity building of early childhood teachers/primary school teachers and parents for home-based early childhood development/school preparation
* Capacity building of dormitory teachers
* Capacity building in advocacy (for local branch coordination committee members)

The *strategic deliveries* of the project are:

* Kick-off project conference for representatives from all 62 local branches.
* Annual regional workshops for sharing experiences and further improving project implementation for representatives from all 62 local branches
* Continuous coaching of the local branch coordination committees

The *advocacy activities* of the project consist of:

* Information campaign and dialogue meetings with local community, herders with pre-school children and children in dormitory and with local administration.
* The campaign and dialogue meetings have a double purpose: One, to raise the awareness of the importance of early childhood development/home-based school preparation and sound socio-emotional and learning conditions for dormitory children. Two, to raise the public support for additional and long-term funding for early childhood development/homebased school preparation and good dormitory life.
* Annual regional workshops where parent representatives and local administration are invited to participate.
* Half-yearly newsletters disseminating good experiences and ideas as well as other information promoting the two key interventions. Newsletters are distributed to all local administrations, relevant regional and national authorities.
* A national advocacy seminar with local, regional and national stakeholders as well as international donors and CSO engaged in early childhood development and dormitory life improvement.
* A report on the project achievements, highlighting the best practices and the recommendations emerging from the final round of regional workshops and end-of-project survey will be published in advance.
* Based on a thorough analysis of the proceedings and findings at the annual regional workshops MAPSSD management will meet national authorities (Ministry of Education) and policy makers (Standing Committee on Social Affairs and Education of the Great State Khural – Mongolian parliament)
* Also based on the outcomes of the regional workshops MAPSSD management will access to national radio, TV and newspapers to campaign for increased nation-wide support for early childhood development/home-based school preparation and improved dormitory conditions.

Social media will play a crucial role in all advocacy activities. MAPSSD has a well-functioning web-site with space earmarked for each of the local branches. Each local branch operates information-networks based where information, meeting invitations etc. are distributed via messaging services on mobile phones.

**How priorities, plans and resources existing within the context are taken into account.**

Quality education is – and has been for decades – a top priority in Mongolia. During socialism up to 1990 cooperatives (*negdels)* and state farms provided kindergartens and good dormitory standard. Mongolia is still struggling to develop proper and financially sustainable alternatives to the social and educational infrastructures in place before 1990. The Mongolian government as well as local administrations are keen on developing innovative and sustainable early childhood development modalities for herder’s children as well as good standard dormitories, however, so far none of the previous efforts implemented by international donors have proven to be financially sustainable. By exploring local human and financial resources the proposed project aims to overcome previous shortcomings in terms of economic and professional feasibility. The project partners have two decades of proven ability to support development of locally rooted and context-based solutions to challenges in education and social life.

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| **Risks** | **Mitigation Measures** |
| It will not be possible to attract sufficient funding for a full-scale implementation of the home-based early childhood/school preparation activities. | * Adjust the outreach of the intervention according to available funding and ensuring that experiences and cases are well documented despite reduced number of participating families |
| It will not be possible to attract additional funding for significantly improving the physical conditions of dormitories | * While improving the physical conditions of dormitories is important the most critical issue according to pre-project surveys is the socio-emotional care and extra-curricular activities offered at the dormitories. Both requirements will be met through training of dormitory teachers and the provision of extra-curricular materials provided by the budget |
| Local branches will not be able to raise funding for their participation in kick-off conference, regional conferences and advocacy seminar. | * Local branches have a strong record in raising the necessary funding. However, in cases some fail, the number of participants will be reduced and/or sought to be covered by redistribution of allocations for the particular activities. |
| The economy in Mongolia deteriorates further reducing the possibilities for raising funding for the planned activities. | * There is not much, the project can do to mitigate such risk. In case Mongolian economy deteriorates to a level where project implementation becomes impossible or significantly hampered, CICED will seek dialogue with MAPSSD and CISU on the possibilities of adjusting the content of the project or to slow down for a period within a no-cost extension of the project. |

**How and with which methods the intervention is to be carried out so as to make it likely to lead to the objectives defined, including how the role as a catalyst has been considered.**

Quality education is considered of great importance in rural Mongolia. It is well documented that herders tend to move to aimag centres or even to one of the three cities in Mongolia if the local school fails to provide quality education and dormitory conditions of satisfactory standard. Through other efforts addressing early childhood education/home-based school preparation it is also well recognized that herder families are eager to support their children in home-based activities and that herders are more likely to enrol their 6-year old children in school when dormitory conditions are good and when the children have been involved in some kind of school preparation activities.

MAPSSD and its local branches have during the former two projects proven to be highly capable of engaging local administration and local communities in activities benefiting social and cultural life in their respective rural districts.

With their ability to ‘mongolize’, i.e. develop communication and collaboration methods that comply with nomadic lifestyle, and their success in achieving additional funding for socio-cultural activities from local administrations, MAPSSD and the 62 local branches are in a very good position to engage both administration and community in developing sustainable approaches for home-based early childhood development/school preparation and good dormitory life. All 62 local branches have school principals and teachers among their coordination committees and thus they have a strong professional and social foundation for engaging parents in particular and their community in general.

The approach of the project is capacity development, intensive collaboration between civil society organization, local community in general and the target group (herders’ families with pre-school children and dormitory children) in particular and local administration and policy makers.

Through capacity development and designing and implementing sustainable methods for home-based early childhood development/school preparation activities and through improving the conditions for dormitory children the project will achieve its objectives.

The promotion and advocacy components of the project will make MAPSSD and the local branches even more visible in the local communities and their proven results and the resulting public support gives them a strong position to act as catalysts between the local population, local administration, regional authorities and eventually also national level policy makers.

**Systematising and using experiences**

Every year experience, idea sharing, planning and coaching workshops will be organized involving representatives from all 62 local branches, i.e. the regional workshops that will take place in July-August in three different locations with a total of 100-110 people representing 20-21 local branches at each of the workshops. All 62 branches bring progress reporting, case studies and examples of self-made materials to the regional workshops.

CICED project manager and MAPSSD management will participate in all regional workshops and make any adjustments in implementation plans based on the workshop findings.

Annual progress reports with wide distribution to local branches, their communities and respective local administrations will synthesize project progress and recommend adjustments if necessary

External evaluation conducted by a local expert with thorough knowledge about education in rural areas in Mongolia will take place during the second year and be incorporated into the proceedings of the regional workshops in July-August 2021 in order to provide the best possible foundation for adjustments of the project into its third and final year.

A report with case studies and recommendations will be available for the end-of-project national advocacy seminar where all relevant stakeholders will be invited to participate.

1. **Phase-out and sustainability**

Neither the local partner including the 62 branches nor the primary target groups (pre-school children of herder families and dormitory children will be left in any sort of dependency when the project ends. The project will utilize already existing structures and the project will only pursue implementation methods, capacity building activities and production of teaching-learning materials that can be covered by local and national funding when the project terminates.

MAPSSD and its local branches will benefit from capacity building activities that will remain an asset also when the project expires. MAPSSD and its local branches will carry stronger capacities in advocacy work and very useful experiences in supporting continued efforts to provide further support for home-based early childhood development/school preparation and dormitory life enhancement.

New capacities of home-based early childhood/school preparation facilitators and dormitory teachers achieved through training and coaching do not depend on continued project support and the intervention will thus have lasting improvements.

The project targets 5-year old children of herder families in the 62 rural districts. The children will immediately benefit from the intervention and will enrol better prepared in school before the project terminates. Children in dormitories are also not dependent on continued project support as the improvements in dormitory life are undertaken during the life time of the project.

With experiences and ideas from 62 different rural districts for efficient approaches to home-based early childhood development/school preparation and dormitory life improvements the project carries great potential in influencing nation-wide policy making in the respective fields.

1. **Planned intervention-related information work in Denmark**

The information work will aim to inform the Danish public on the efficient utilization of Danish support to development in general and in pursuit of UN Sustainable Development Goals in particular. Further, the information work will address specific target groups likely to have a professional interest in the project proceedings and outcomes, i.e., early childhood and primary school professionals, including BUPL (via Børn&Unge magazine) and Danmarks Lærerforening (via Folkeskolen).

Information about the project in both countries through social media, internet and meetings. Progress and activities will be posted on the CICED web-site.

CICED will seek collaboration with student(s) at Danmarks Medie- og Journalisthøjskole and RUC looking for international locations to practise their skills, including skills in podcast-production.

Case stories will be collected and edited by CICED and shared with the public via CICED website, newsletter and through the GER magazine of Danish-Mongolian Society with whom CICED has long-standing collaboration. CICED has articles published regularly in GER. CICED will also on this proposed intervention deliver stories and other inputs to Global Nyt and Verdens Bedste Nyheder.

1. **Supplementary financing**

The proposed intervention benefits from three sources of supplementary funding: a) specific financial contributions from CICED; b) workhour coverage for CICED project coordinator according to agreement with employer, and c) contributions-in-kind by various Mongolian stakeholders, primarily the local public administrations and the local school administration.

Supplementary funding under categories a) and b) are secured at the time of submitting this application and supports project monitoring and technical support.

The supplementary funding by the Mongolian stakeholders (category c) is a continuation of quite a long cost-sharing principle/tradition of the CICED-MAPSSD collaboration and totals a significant contribution. The Mongolian stakeholders typically cover half of all costs related to participation in national conferences and seminars, regional workshops and in training courses. Local branches hosting regional conferences mobilize hundreds of unpaid workhours necessary for the accommodation of and boarding for around hundred participants. Visiting branches are provided with vehicles and petrol from their local administration. Participants in national conferences, seminars and training courses in Ulaanbaatar in receive only 50% of travel and accommodation costs.

1. [EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society 2014-2017](https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-governance-civilsociety/document/mongolia-abstracts-eu-roadmap-engagement-civil-society) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Poverty Rate in Mongolia.* World Bank Press Release No: 2017/10/17 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Zuud:* a combination of poor conditions for livestock breeding during summer and autumn, extreme winter conditions and insufficient emergency capacity killing large quantities of livestock [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2016 — Mongolia Country Report. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [GPE’s Work for Early Childhood Care and Education](https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-brief-gpes-work-early-childhood-care-and-education) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)