



RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT (VER.2) MONGOLIAN DZUD 2016-2017



Save the Children

Arkhangai Aimag 10th – 14th January 2017
Bayan-Ulgii Aimag 19th – 22nd January 2017
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Acronyms and key terms

Aimag: Province

Bagh: Village

DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction

Dzud: Slow onset, natural disaster in which a summer drought is followed by heavy snowfalls and unusually low temperatures in winter

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

FSL: Food Security and Livelihoods

Ger: Traditional Mongolian house

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GoM: Government of Mongolia

JPF: Japan Platform Fund

MEAL: Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning

MNT: Mongolian Tugriks (1 USD = 2,465 MNT as of February 2017)

MRCS: Mongolian Red Cross Society

NAMEM: National Agency for Meteorology and Environment Monitoring

NEMA: National Emergency Management Agency

Otor: Traditional practice of temporary moving to other aimag or other soum to seek better grass and pasture condition for livestock

Soum: District

UN: United Nations

WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

I. Executive summary

For the second year in a row (2016/2017 winter), Mongolian families are facing a severe winter, known as a dzud. Despite a fairly good summer, heavy early snow falls in October 2016 followed by plummeting temperatures towards the end of the year, left a layer of ice on the ground, making it very difficult for livestock belonging to the country's 153,085 herder households (17.8% of total households of Mongolia) to graze. The heavy snow cover has also disrupted transportation and pushed consumption of fuel up, impacting the normal operation of education and healthcare services during the winter. Temperatures are expected to fall sharply again in a few days' time, from 18th January 2017.

In addition to the winter conditions, the following factors are compounding the problem for authorities and households this year:

- Many herders' livelihoods were significantly affected by last year's dzud;
- The price of meat and other animal products has fallen sharply;
- State budgets for services including health and education have been cut; and
- Local level preparedness particularly on reserve of hay and fodder is not sufficient due to consecutive severe winter and budgetary constraints.

Save the Children's assessment has found that the most vulnerable households, particularly herder households, are already struggling to cope with the impact of a second severe winter in a row; most herders have a loan from the bank and buy food on credit from local markets. Children – especially those from herders' families - are expected to be particularly affected by this crisis; the usually long journey to school at the beginning of term is now more dangerous, their schools and dormitories are incredibly cold, and respiratory infections are common, but access to healthcare is very poor. With their parents' struggling financially, children are arriving at school without warm clothes and without money to properly look after themselves, not to mention the psychological impacts of being separated from their parents for longer than expected with little or no means of communication.

In response to this situation, Save the Children proposes to implement a multi-sector programme aiming to protect livelihoods of most vulnerable herder households while ensuring the basic education and health services are provided to affected children.

II. Background

Mongolia is a landlocked country located between Russia and China, with a population of approximately 3 million, in a territory of 1.6 million square kilometres. Mongolia has an extreme continental climate with long, cold winters (January averages dropping as low as -30°C or -86°F) and short summers, during which time most of its annual precipitation falls. The geography of Mongolia is varied, with great steppes to the east, the Gobi desert to the south, and the cold and mountainous regions to the north and west.

In 2011, Mongolia was one of the fastest growing economies, expanding at a rate of 17.5% as a result of a booming mining sector. However since that time, economic growth has decelerated sharply and the Asian Development Bank is forecasting 0.3% growth for 2016. Mongolia's tugrik (MNT), named the world's worst-performing currency in 2016, has fallen nearly 24% against the dollar in last year. In addition the country is facing debt repayments of up to 2.0 billion USD in coming two years (2017 and 2018). The poverty rate remains high in rural and peri-urban areas, and income inequality within and between regions is widening. One in five people (21.6%) lives below the national poverty line in Mongolia, and in some rural regions, one in every three people (31.4%) lives in poverty.¹

Furthermore, global climate change and the large mining sector present new challenges to the Mongolian ecosystem as well as to nomadic herders who wish to sustain their traditional ways of life. Mineral commodities account for over 94% of Mongolia's exports², and mining provides 40% of total government revenues.³ On the other hand, animal husbandry is the fundamental source of food consumption and raw materials for the national economy, contributing 13% of the total GDP. Livestock workers make up around 27% of the total labour force. In 2015 there were a total of 55.9 million livestock heads, owned by 216,734 households, of which 153,085 were herder households.⁴

Herder households periodically experience a phenomena that is known locally as a dzud; a cyclical, slow-onset disaster unique to Mongolia. It consists of a summer drought followed by heavy winter snow (10-350cm) and extremely cold temperatures (down to -40°C or -104°C), which results in insufficient hay stockpiles and access to pasture in the winter months. This creates significant challenges for many basic services such as transportation, health and education, and in the long run may lead to the collapse of livelihoods in vulnerable herder communities. Mongolia lost over 1.1 million livestock in last year's dzud, whereas in the 2010 dzud, 217,000 households, or 769,000 individuals (28% of the population) were affected and 8 million livestock lost.

In November 2016, Mongolia's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and National Agency for Meteorology and Environment Monitoring (NAMEM) issued a warning for dzud. In a formal letter dated 20th December 2016, the Government of Mongolia (GoM) then called for humanitarian assistance from international organisations to help herders and local communities experiencing severe winter conditions by preventing collapse of their livelihoods. As of 4th January 2017, 127 soums⁵ in 17 aimags (provinces), along with 3 districts of the capital city, were identified as facing severe winter conditions, mostly because of unusual snowfall in early October 2016, followed by unexpected and exceptionally heavy snowfall during November 2016, which left a layer of ice on the ground, preventing livestock from being able to graze. In response, Save the Children

¹ National Statistical Office, Household Socio-Economic Survey, 2014

² Mongolian Statistical Yearbook 2015

³ Mongolian mining sector overview, Purplebook, 2013

⁴ National Statistical Office

⁵ Local administrative units

Mongolia organised an initial rapid needs assessment from 10th -14th January 2017 in Arkhangai, one of the most affected aimags. A second assessment – focusing on the impact of the dzud on Education – was carried out in Bayan-Ulgii aimag, another particularly affected aimag from 19th – 22nd January 2017 (please see Annex V for a summary of the findings of this assessment).

III. Methodology

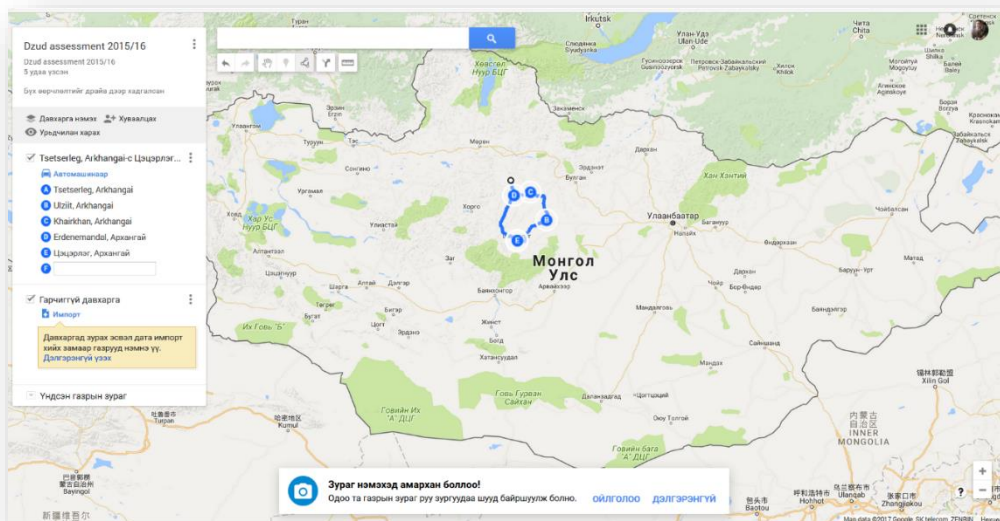
The rapid needs assessment was carried out in order to better understand:

- The severity of the current situation in Arkhangai aimag;
- The level of preparedness at the aimag, soum and household levels; and
- The priority needs, particularly of the most vulnerable herder households, now and through the spring.

4 dzud-affected and nearly affected soums - Ulziit, Khaikhan, Tsetserleg and Erdenemandal - in Arkhangai were assessed (see map below), using the following methods:

- **A desk review** was conducted in order to examine underlying issues with the pastoralist livelihood system, issues related to poverty and vulnerability in rural Mongolia, as well as assessments and other actions underway or planned by the government or the humanitarian community;
- **Key informant interviews** (KII) were conducted with a variety of stakeholders – including aimag, soum, bagh governors, the Head of the Health Department, Head of Education, Culture and Art Department, Head of Food and Agriculture Department, Head of Local NEMA, Head of Social Policy Department, local police officer as well as sectoral heads at the soum level.
- **Focus group discussions** (FGD) were conducted with boys and girls aged 6 - 16, as well as with elder herders.
- **10 household interviews** were conducted with herder families and their children.
- **Market trader interviews** were carried out in order to better understand key food, non-food and animal feed markets.
- **Banks interviews** were also conducted to better understand the livelihood of herders.

In addition survey questions were developed covering the areas of food security, livelihoods and education primarily. Data was collected from households across 3 soums – Tariat, Khangai and Tsakhir - in Arkhangai through phone surveys, from 13th – 18th January 2017. Out of 152 herders with phone numbers who received support from Save the Children during the 2016 dzud, enumerators were able to make contact with 82 people. Out of the 82 respondents, 65 answered yes to the question if they are still herding. 17 respondents have stopped herding, for a number of different reasons. Among them 4 households moved to Ulaanbaatar city and 5 households moved to a soum centre. These respondents were not included in the survey.



Map: SC assessed area

The main challenges of the assessment were the limited time, vast distances travelled as well as the road conditions which resulted in a limited number of focus group discussions and household interviews. Conducting a phone survey is likely to be less efficient and reliable than a formal direct interview where questions can be better explained and triangulated and where respondents have more patience to answer questions.

IV. Key Findings

Winter condition

There are 19 soums with 101 baghs (villages), 14,043 herder families and 5,008,636 livestock in Arkhangai aimag. Out of 19, 10 soums are in dzud condition. Snow depth is 10-15cm in grassland steppe areas and 45-50cm in the mountainous area. According to the latest information at the aimag level, 18,766 livestock⁶ have died as of 10th January 2017 (895 horses, 41 camels, 2,071 cows, 9,525 sheep, and 6,234 goats). A total of 6,227 herder families with 1.5 million livestock live in areas with a huge (and unusual) amount of snow. Among them there are 400 pregnant women, 3,119 children under 5 years old, 947 disabled people, and 896 particularly poor/ vulnerable people.

In 2 soums, Ugiinuur and Khashaat, there is an outbreak of livestock infectious disease “sheep pox”, so there is quarantine in place. Over 100 people are working on this issue, which has so far cost 99,000,000 MNT (40,000 USD). In order to contain the outbreak, 3,053 livestock from 74 herder families have been intentionally killed.

Soum pastureland reservation (pastureland made available to herders in case of emergency) was utilized in November and December 2016. At the aimag level, reservation of hay from the Livestock Protection Fund along with the State reservation fund will begin to be distributed to soums from 14th January 2017. This will be sold to herders as the fund needs to be refilled.

3 pregnant women, 114 children under 5 years old, 15 disabled person and 36 elders from 125 herder families of Jargalant, Ugiinuur, Khangai, Khashaat, Tsenkher and Tsetserleg soums are wintering in *otor* (traditional practice of temporary moving to other aimag or other soum to seek better grass and pasture condition for livestock) within the aimag territory.

⁶ Aimag data of livestock loss, 11 January 2017.

The weather is expected to get sudden cold from 18th January 2017, with the arrival of cold air from the north. Temperatures are expected to drop to -25°C during the day and -30- -40°C at night. In Ulziit soum, it has already snowed 10 times since October 2016 and the soum is particularly cold due to its proximity to the Orkhon River. According to the latest data (December 2016), a total of 282,351 livestock heads in this soum are affected by the dzud. A total of 6,972 have died so far (as of 11th January 2017). This is compared to 7,870 livestock lost *in total* in the soum during last winter. With the temperature drop and more snow expected, many more livestock will be lost.

It's important to note that the majority of livestock losses will be suffered in the spring, when the animals are at their weakest, so the full impact of the dzud is not yet visible. In Tsetserleg soum, it has snowed 19 times since October 2016, and in this and all of the soums assessed, extremely cold temperatures in November froze the snow already on the ground, leaving a layer of ice, which was covered again by snow. Similarly in Erdenemandal and Khairkhan soums, it has snowed 12 times since October 2016 and snow/ice coverage (up to 40cm depth) is continuous across the soum. According to the phone survey, 45% of total respondents who are still herding have lost some of their livestock in the last 2 months. In 2016, 7 soums of Arkhangai aimag were affected by the dzud, which resulted in an estimated 18.2 billion MNT (7.3 million USD) economic loss (for more information please refer to the annex III).

4.1 Education

Similarly to last year, 2015/2016, heating is a considerable concern for schools affected by the dzud. Some schools have enough coal to last the winter however this is based on normal conditions; if the weather worsens schools will run out of coal before the end of the cold months in the middle of May. As a result of budget cuts and increasing energy costs, other schools are already in debt for the coal and electricity they have purchased so far this winter (see Annex for more information). For example, for the school in Ulziit soum, the cost of coal has increased from 80,000 to 115,000 MNT (32.2-46.4 USD) since September 2016, and they have only 30 ton coal left, which will last one month. The reason for the increase in price is that the road used for transportation of coal to the soum centre is no longer accessible due to the heavy snow cover, so alternative routes are being used, doubling the fuel cost and timing. In addition, from October 2016 – February 2017, the school budget for electricity was 590,000 MNT (238 USD) per month, but the actual cost was 1,500,000 - 1,700,000 MNT (605-685 USD). The school had enough money to cover electricity costs for the four months at the end of 2016, but spent all of it in the first 2 months due to over-working of the boiler, leaving the remaining two months as a debt. Old and over-worked boilers in the schools are also at risk of breakage, and old heating system pipes are at risk of freezing and bursting, but budgets only cover the cost of coal, not spare parts.

Another key concern of staff at the schools in Arkhangai aimag is the temperature in the dormitories. Many of the dormitory buildings are old and in need of repair – heat is being lost through the ceilings, walls and windows; in some cases children have stuffed gaps in walls and wooden window frames with cloth to try to keep the rooms warm. The temperature of many of the dorm rooms is 10-13°C (50-55.4°F), leaving children with no option but to wear their outdoor clothes at all times. Up to 100 children in each soum school are living in these conditions. Classrooms and staffrooms face the same temperatures and the health of both children and teachers are affected (respiratory infections and influenza). Six children in Khairkhan soum have already left the dormitory to find alternative accommodation (maybe as a child-led family or maybe drop out of school altogether) due to the cold conditions. Teachers reported that if the temperatures fall much lower they will be forced to close dormitory rooms. The male dormitory at the school in Khairkhan soum is already closed. The female dorm is operating but is said to be in a very risky condition - the

ceiling is unstable. Classrooms in Khairkhan are still open, but 4 of them are around 10°C only (50°F). The windows need replacing but this can't be done until the summer. In the school in Erdenemandal soum, one of the dormitories is home to 99 children, but it is incredibly cold, and children wear their winter jacket inside all the time to stay warm. Classrooms in Erdenemandal are also very cold (around 7-10°C or 44.6-50°F) and children and teachers often suffer from sore throat and infections like tonsillitis.

From a WASH perspective, we also identified needs within schools. For example, according to the school doctor in Ulziit soum, there is no access to safe drinking water in the dormitory. Through a simple oral check the doctor reports that almost 100% children having dehydration (dry tongue, dry loose skin and eye sight etc.). She also noted that none of the dorm rooms have washing sinks or hand sanitizer, which causes hygiene problems among the children and spread of infection that is difficult to control. In Khairkhan school there is a need to replace a water canister that is not safe (costs 150,000 MNT or 60.5 USD) and there is no water purifier or dispenser in the dorm rooms. In Erdenemandal, there is an average of 20 children per one sink in the dormitories. The toilets are outdoors and there is also no shower, so children have to use the soum public shower.

Another issue repeatedly voiced in meetings with staff and in FGD with children is the risks and implications of the journey children have to take to get to school. Children from herder families travel up to 130km to reach their school at the beginning of term. Many children have relatively shorter (40-60km) journeys, but there are often difficult roads to travel on during the winter. Herder's children attending school in Ulziit make one of 7 journeys ranging from 45-80km in distance, from 3 baghs and 4 soums. Of these 7 routes, 4 use a road that is particularly difficult at the moment due to the winter condition, and around 120 children are affected by this. For children attending school in Khairkhan soum, the bagh roads are currently closed due to snow. Last year 4 children were unable to go home because of the coldness and road condition, and teachers are expecting that this year that number may increase. Children travelling to Tsetserleg soum for school travel an average of 90km (furthest is 130km). 70 children travel to the soum on a particularly difficult road. In order to reach Erdenemandal school 108 children come from the most isolated bagh (Ider-Ulaan) along a difficult road for 40-60km. The bagh with the second most difficult road is Alag-Uul and 130 children are affected by this road.

Common modes of transportation are motorcycle, car (if family can afford), or porter (small truck). The use of motorcycles is prohibited until March 2017 due to the dangerous road conditions, however teachers report that it still happens as there is often no alternative for herder families. Schools are responsible for giving children hand to hand to parents or care givers, but sometimes herder families request that children are sent home in a car heading in the right direction, but the car may be unsafe, the driver may be drunk, etc. Some roads are currently closed due to the snow, and the low attendance numbers (see table below) for the first day of the new term (12th January 2017) can in part be explained by the winter condition of the roads. It's important to note that this may also be due to school term starting at the end of a week, and so parents may be waiting until the weekend to make the journey to the soum, but even taking this into account, attendance is extremely low and concerning. To miss school by one week is common among herder's children, at beginning of the quarter and towards the end of the quarter. Sometimes it is the other way around, parents don't come to pick up their children or don't visit them for more than month, which causes psychological stress and trouble with learning so that they start to fall behind from their peers. There are sometimes review classes set up to help these children catch up, and sometimes teachers give extra learning materials for children to take home.

School attendance by soums

SOUM SCHOOL	ATTENDANCE ON 12 TH JANUARY 2017 (FIRST DAY OF THIS QUARTER TERM)	ATTENDANCE THIS TIME LAST YEAR
ULZIIT	(School term hasn't started yet)	(School term hasn't started yet)
KHAIRKHAN	45%, and two teachers currently have influenza and are unable to teach	80-90%
TSETSERLEG	2% in dormitory (out of a total 138 children, only 3 arrived)	Unknown
ERDENEMANDAL	72% in school, 61% in dormitory (the majority of non-attending are herders' children from the most isolated bagh along the most difficult road, but it may also be due to sickness (see table below)	90.7% at school

School dormitory attendance of Erdenemandal soum by 13th January 2017

Student number living in dorm	Not arrived yet	Bagh name
52	17 (32% arrived)	Alag uul
48	25 (52% arrived)	Idar-Ulaan
34	20 (58% arrived)	Teel

Additionally, there is a high risk of influenza throughout the winter, which leads to children missing school, and also teachers unable to work. The risk of children dropping out of school is also high for the most vulnerable herder families who can't provide warm clothes and other costs associated with their children's education (transportation, school stationery, etc.).

More broadly on health in schools, there is a lack of medical supplies and medicines in schools. School doctors identified the following needs:

- Chloramine, soda, and bandages
- Thermometer
- First aid supplies
- Hand sanitizer
- Children's blood pressure monitor
- Ear microscope
- Natural products to help with immunity, including curd drink "aarts", seabacktorn, cranberry juice, etc.)

The lack of school dentists was also raised (Erdenemandal soum have already requested support from World Vision on this). Another big issue is stomach ache (including appendicitis) in dormitory children, possibly due to the quality of water supplied for drinking, without a standard filter or purifier. It was also observed during the household visits that herders can't reach the river so they bring ice for drinking water, unsure of quality. They also bring snow from top of the mountain, to use for washing etc.

All of the schools assessed, including all dormitories (except Tsetserleg soum), have only outdoor toilet facilities, mostly without lighting. This not only presents hygiene risks, but also safety and security risks for children, particularly girls at night, but also throughout the day for all users as

surfaces are icy and dirty, making it easy to fall and spread infection. Given the risk of respiratory infection, safe hygiene practices, particularly hand washing, are essential for preventing outbreaks of infection. In Ulziit soum the school does not have any proper standing sinks and very few other options for washing. Provision of disinfection chemicals both for indoor and outdoor toilets is also lacking. Across the aimag, school, dormitory and kindergarten children are affected by numerous cases of bronchitis and tonsillitis, which could be prevented through awareness raising and training on prevention of disease as well as provision of masks, hand sanitizer and nutritional supplements to support children's immunity.

In Erdenemandal soum there is a well near to the school, which it uses for drinking and making food for dormitory and school children. The school doctor mentioned that the oral health of school children is poor, and that numerous children have had stomach pain, so there is an urgent need to investigate the drinking water quality of the well and provide an alternative source of drinking water in the meantime. In Erdenemandal soum kindergarten, there are indoor toilets but they have been fitted incorrectly meaning that when they are flushed dirty water is sprayed around the room; teachers clean the room every day to try to control the spread of infection.

In terms of DRR, aimag NEMA reported that all government organisations in the soum have a DRR plan however, it is not prepared thoroughly and not updated regularly. In all four soum schools assessed there is no specific programme regarding emergency in schools. Through Save the Children's JPF-funded project the school in Ulziit soum does now have a standard DRR plan, which has been reviewed by NEMA. In Khairkhan soum, the school has a DRR plan but it is never practiced and updated. However there is a school radio that raises awareness and information regarding emergencies. Once a year on 26th March there is also a community public practice day for emergency response, and there is a club established by World Vision, which runs training on safety and security for children. Training on first aid and responding to emergencies is delivered by MRC, NEMA and the UN once a quarter under the "Gobi baavgai" (gobi bear) programme. In Tsetserleg, the soum governor's office decided to have an emergency committee in school and publicly two times a year runs a practice in terms of emergency response. The school does have a DRR plan, prepared in November 2016, but it has not been tested yet and does not include the dzud.

As mentioned under Child Protection, communication is important for children who are separated from their parents during the winter. There is often no landline phone in the dormitories and if children do have their own mobile phone they struggle to pay for credit. Sometimes they borrow the dorm teachers' phone, or borrow each other's. In Ulziit soum the school dorm received a landline phone through Save the Children's JPF-funded project, but sometimes the herder's phone network does not work.

4.2 Child Protection

Due to the mobile nature of pastoralist households, children – from ages 6 to 18 – are often separated from their parents in order to access education and other services in aimag and soum centres, whilst their parents tend to herds in remote areas of the countryside. This separation happens year after year, dzud or no dzud, but the severe winter makes it more difficult, beginning with a long, dangerous and cold journey, often by motorcycle (see Education section for more information). Whilst children are living away from their parents, they will live either:

- With other children in school dormitories;
- With another family (friends or relatives); or
- With siblings as a "child-led" family unit, led by the eldest sibling.

From a psychological point of view, separation from parents particularly for long periods of time causes distress, especially for the youngest children, leaving them upset, feeling anxious and having difficulty sleeping. Peer support mechanisms and other psychological first aid (PFA) methodologies to support children's emotional wellbeing can be useful in these circumstances. Furthermore, those children with minimal adult supervision and care have high risk of involve in crime and bullying. For instance in Khaikhan soum, 3 incidents of peer pressuring/bullying/racketeering have been reported among school children this particular winter which is unusually high. According to the local police, the causes could be the insufficient parental supervision and the widespread financial stress among the herder communities in this winter.

For children living in dormitories, heating is a particular issue (see Education section), made worse by the fact that some children from the most vulnerable families do not have warm enough winter clothes. Furthermore, holes in the building walls are not only an issue for the cold; girls in one FGD said that they felt uncomfortable due to the lack of privacy they have when showering.

For children living in child-led households, the youngest sibling or siblings can be left at home alone whilst elder children go to school, leaving them without any care to ensure they are warm enough, well fed, and don't burn themselves on the stove, etc.

Many herder parents receive a "child allowance" from the government (20,000 MNT or 8.1 USD per child per month) to help cover the cost of things like warm clothes, food and school stationery. However, for the most herder households this is their only source of income other than the two times in the year when their livestock bring an income (in May when cashmere is sold, and in October/ November when meat is sold). With their livelihoods struggling, many herder households are using their child allowance money to try to ensure their animals survive the winter. This finding appears to be confirmed by the fact that local market stores have almost stopped selling clothes and education items.

The lack of financial support also affects children's ability to keep in touch with their parents; there is often no landline phone in the dormitories and if children do have their own mobile phone they struggle to pay for credit. Sometimes they borrow the dorm teachers' phone, or borrow each other's.

The burden of responsibility on the eldest sibling in the child-led families is high, leading to stress and compromising of their own wellbeing and education. According to the phone survey, 34% of total respondents who have children, answered that their children suffers from sleeping difficulties due to stress.

4.3 Health and Nutrition

Health care services in the four soums assessed are struggling in the current dzud. Two of the soum health centres (Ulziit and Erdenemandal) are generally warm and in a reasonable condition, but the other two are experiencing heating problems. All four are facing challenges with fuel costs and ensuring access to health services and medicines for all households, especially isolated herder households. In Tsetserleg and Uguunuur soums, ambulances have broken down so health centres rent cars from individuals to ensure health service provision. In Khaikhan and Uzliit soums, the health centres are in debt as a result of the high cost of fuel needed for medical transportation. 18 bagh doctors (all female) across the four soums use motorcycles to reach those in need, but this is particularly challenging and dangerous during a severe winter.

Health centres also reported a shortage of medical equipment and supplies. First aid kits and essential medicines at herder's family and school dormitory level are also in short supply. At the

same time, the number of emergency calls for respiratory tract infections and complications has increased. Up to 90% of in-patients and 60% of out-patients across the aimag are poorly with respiratory infections. All soums assessed reported increasing cases of respiratory tract infections among children, with common complications including pneumonia. There are currently 15 children for the 9 beds available in Ulziit soum health centre, so additional beds are being used elsewhere (e.g. in maternity homes). Healthcare professionals are also concerned about children's malnutrition (e.g. there are currently 78 cases of malnourishment, 78 cases of anaemia and 72 cases of vitamin D deficiency being managed by Erdenemandal inter-soum clinic), which although not directly caused by the winter dzud, significantly limits children's immunity. There are shortages of vitamins (e.g. vitamin D, C and A) and minerals (zinc, iron and calcium), as well as natural products that would support children's immune system and recovery, like *aarts* (hot liquid curd), sea buckthorn and blueberry juice, which are not easily available in the soum centres but are often used by herder households when someone becomes ill. There is usually only one pharmacy in each soum, so the price of medicines is quite high and not all medicines are available.

According to the phone survey, 54% of total respondents answered that they are able to access health services. From the respondents who are not able to access health services, 33% answered that they lack the money to do so, whereas 23% answered that they live too far away, and 13% don't have time to go to the medical centre due to their herding responsibilities. For all of these reasons, pregnant women within herder households are particularly vulnerable during the winter; they are required to attend the Arkhangai General Hospital three times: at 3, 5 and 8 months for check-ups, but reaching the aimag centre can be difficult and also dangerous in winter. Each soum health centre is responsible for normal antenatal process and controls any complications, while emergency surgeries and deliveries are carried out at the Erdenemandal inter-soum clinic. Other areas covered by the Erdenemandal inter-soum clinic include paediatrics, surgery and infectious diseases, with 19 in-patient beds. This clinic and others report shortages of basic and important medical equipment, including injection pumps and air humidifiers for children suffering from respiratory infections. On the day we visited the clinic there were 5 children with pneumonia, but no antibiotics were available due to 2 week delays in procurement since the beginning of 2017.

Finally, all of the health centres visited have only outdoor toilet facilities, mostly without lighting. This not only presents public health risks, but also risks to the safety and security of patients and healthcare professionals using the facilities.

4.4 Food Security and Livelihoods

In Arkhangai aimag, the status of herder households' livelihoods has deteriorated significantly over the last three years, 2014-2017. Key informants said that their income as well as the value of their productive assets (livestock) has almost halved in the period 2014-2017. For instance, the average price of a 2 year old sheep had fallen from 60,000 MNT (24.2 USD) per head in the autumn of 2014 to 35,000 MNT (14.1 USD) in the autumn of 2016. Additionally, herders were able to sell sheep skin for over 10,000-12,000 MNT (4-4.8 USD) previously, but are now struggling to sell them for 1,500 MNT (0.6 USD).

Local stores confirm that sales have decreased significantly in last two years, 2015-2017 due to the lack of herders' purchasing power. Due to their lack of cash, most households take food and other items on credit from local grocery stores and the majority of herder households have a bank loan. Compared to previous years, more herders face challenges to repay their loan on time. According to our phone survey, 62% of total respondents answered that their household income has decreased

compared to last year while only 2% answered that it has increased. We also know that the majority of households in Arkhangai aimag are particularly vulnerable because 80% of the children in the aimag are covered by the government's "child money" program, which provides additional financial support (20,000 MNT per child, or 8 USD) to the most vulnerable households with children (up to level 10 out of 20 levels). Despite its intended use, many of the herder households we spoke to said that the child money they receive is currently their only source of household income.

At the aimag level, distribution of hay reserved by the Aimag Livestock Protection Fund will begin to soums from 16th January 2017. The hay will be sold to herders at the average market price (6,000 MNT or 2.4 USD for 1 bag of hay, 7,000 MNT or 2.8 USD for oats and 15,000 MNT or 6 USD for fodder) to ensure the fund is refilled. Guided by the aimag authorities, each soum also reserved approximately 20 tons of hay and 6 tons of fodder in preparation for the difficult winter, which includes available hay and fodder that retailers sell. At the household level, a relatively good summer in 2016 and lessons learned from last winter (2015/2016) has meant that herder households have prepared reasonable amount of hay at the household level. Household level preparedness was also confirmed by the phone survey; most respondents (71%) answered that their winter preparation is better than the last year, whereas only 3% answered that it's worse. However, herders began feeding their livestock to keep them strong from November 2016 and most herders reported that they have already used 50% of their stockpiles. An observation from meeting with herder households was that particularly the most vulnerable herders including lifelong herders don't have and don't know and have never heard about the use of barometers to forecast the weather. For those young herders, they lack of herding experience and knowledge particularly improving quality of livestock and winter preparedness issues. In addition, young herders reported that they lack of financial knowledge in household income (usually in spring when cashmere and wool is sold) and spending.

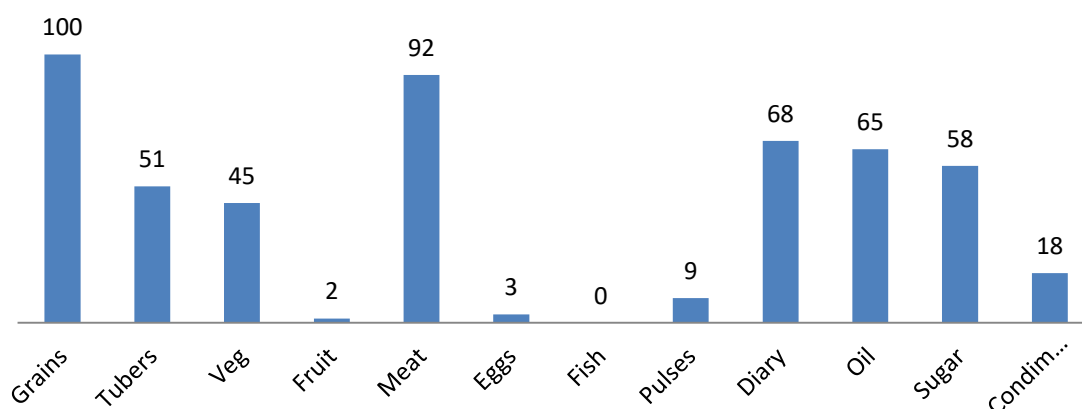
As of 10th January 2017, 18,766 livestock heads have been lost this winter, which makes up 0.37% of the total herd of Arkhangai aimag. Further drops in temperature (to -25°C in day and -30- -40°C at night) and more snow are expected, and the full impact of the dzud will not be seen until the spring, from March 2017 onwards, when the animals are at their weakest. It is important to note that Index based livestock insurance is offered and provided by 4 insurance companies. Insurance payment will be in condition of 6% of livestock loss of soum level. Approximately 7.6%⁷ of the soum herder households got the livestock insurance. However, many herders particularly the most vulnerable can't afford to pay. In addition, to get the bank loan, it is advised or asked to get livestock insurance so herders purchase the least priced insurance products of 10,000-30,000 MNT without understanding the actual purpose or benefits of doing so.

Household food consumption

Household dietary diversity is a common proxy indicator for food security used in emergency settings. Cutting down on more expensive food is reported to be one of the most common coping mechanisms in many humanitarian contexts when families have limited resources to access food at the household level. Save the Children collected data from respondents on dietary diversity at the household level during our phone survey. The respondents were asked to recall food consumption during the last 24 hours and to report whether or not they had consumed food items from the 12 standard food groups.

⁷ Based on the data of Ulziit and Tsetserleg soums

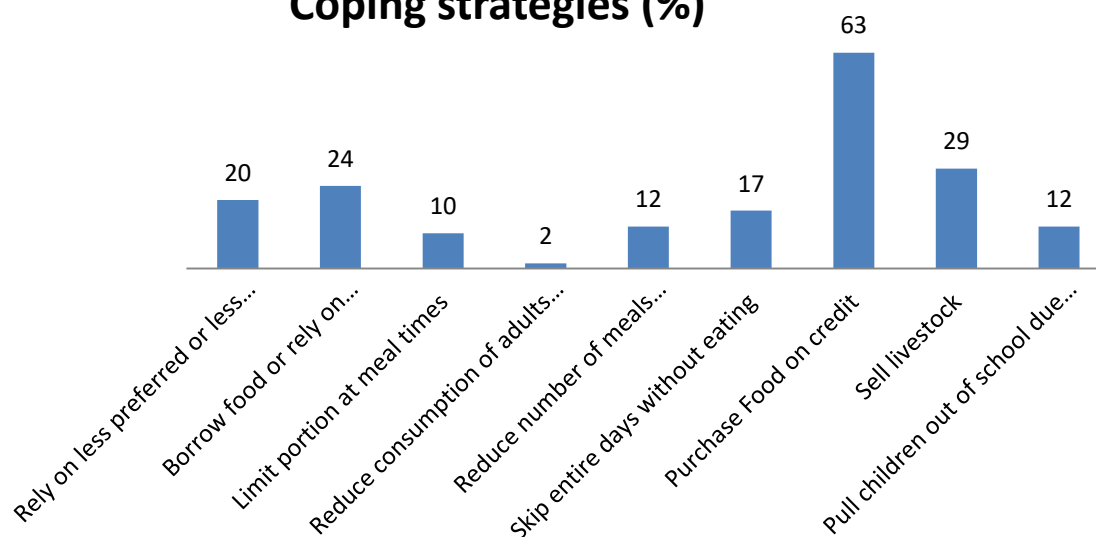
Household Food Consumption and Dietary Diversity (%)



Food diversity was noticed to be normal for this time of the year; the average household dietary diversity score was 5.1. Food composition consists mainly of flour, meat and onion for meals and milk for tea.

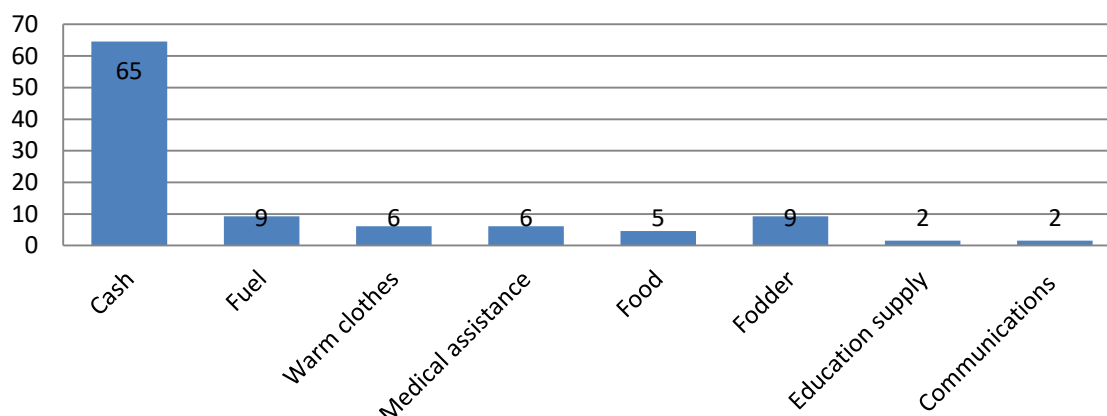
Negative coping strategy

Coping strategies (%)



The most commonly reported coping strategies used by respondent households were: purchasing food on credit (63%); selling livestock (29%); and borrowing food from relatives (24%). 13 households reported switching to poorer quality foods, and 11 households reported going entire days without eating. With further temperature drops and snowfall, we expect that herder households will further reduce expenditure on children (warm clothes, school supplies, etc.), transportation and communication costs in order to focus on the survival of their livestock.

Most needed items for herders (%)



65% of households consulted during the phone survey indicated that cash is the most needed item for herders to deal with the current winter condition, followed by animal fodder and fuel for transportation. Main reason of preference for cash was it has more flexibility and options for herders to prioritize their needs by their own.

V. Market

In general markets at the soum level appear to be well integrated, competitive and providing all the basic food and non-food items households require as part of their monthly basket. In most soums, local stores bring commodities from Ulaanbaatar directly except for some stores in Tsetserleg soum that bring commodities from Erdenet (the capital of another aimag). Local stores regularly receive commodities somewhere between once every 2 weeks and once a month, and all stores reported a maximum re-stocking time of 3 days if demand increased by more than 50%.

Price of goods as of 10-14 January, 2017

Price of items	Ulziit (15 stores)	Khairkhan (17 stores)	Tsetserleg (18 stores)	Erdenemandal (24 stores)	Average
Flour	28,500	27,000	25,000	25,000	26,750
(25 kg & 50 kg)	51,000	54,000	49,000	53,000	50,000
Rice 1 kg	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,300	2,500
Sugar 1 kg	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,300	2,500
Vegetable oil (1 litre)	3,550-4,350	3,500	3,500-4,000	3,500	3,500
Noodle (300 gr)	600-1,200	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Hay		8,000		9,000	8,500
Fodder	13,000-14,000	13,000-14,000		13,000	13,300
Sheep (mature)	65,000	60,000-70,000	70,000		66,600
Goat (mature)		40,000	45,000		42,500

In most cases, it's not local grocery stores that sell hay and fodder, but individuals who have a large vehicle. Approximately 10 individuals sell hay and fodder in each soum, which means they limit the volume of hay and fodder based on the demand and ability of people to purchase at the local level.

Animal price comparison between 2015 and 2017 (Quarter I)⁸

LIVESTOCK	PRICE PER HEALTHY ADULT MALE (MNT) AS OF QUARTER #1 OF			CHANGE PERCENT
	2014	2015	2016	
GOAT	94,500	88,500	46,500	50.7%
SHEEP	147,000	137,00	95,500	35%
CATTLE	717,500	701,500	532,000	25.8%
HORSE	620,750	620,000	464,000	25.2%
CAMEL	775,250	825,250	762,000	4.7%

According to the phone survey, 78% of households reported being able to access their primary market place in the soum centre without difficulty with most households travelling weekly, and a few monthly to the market to purchase key goods.

All traders reported that the number of customers requesting credit had increased, and that the amount being requested had also increased. This highlights two areas of concern: 1) decreased purchasing power, increased credit needs and debt accumulation highlights increasing vulnerability among households, and 2) provision of increased credit coupled with a general decrease in demand and customer footfall is placing traders at the soum level, particularly smaller shops, in a difficult financial position. It was proven from the interviews with herders that most of them already take food and other necessary items on credit from traders at the soum.

VI. Gender

The division of decision making and administrative positions at aimag and soum level was found to be approximately 60% (male) and 40% (female). The Arkhangai Aimag Deputy Governor is a woman and her team consists of almost gender-balanced officials. The heads of all soum health centres visited during this assessment are women, and women were also found to be running local grocery stores and banks. At the household level, it is often (but not exclusively) men who herd livestock, and women who look after the home and children when they are not away at school. However, during our assessment we also met with a number of female-headed households, including a single 75 year old grandmother, who tends to a small herd and is the sole care-giver for 4 school-age children. We also met with two 16 year old girls who look after younger siblings in child-led family units, whilst going to school themselves.

Girls living in other families and in dormitories are most vulnerable from the gender-based violence point of view. Outside toilets are not separated for men and women and do not have locks, impacting both privacy and safety. There are also often no lights outside the schools, dormitories and health centres, which poses considerable health and protection risks.

For isolated herder households, women's particular needs relating to mensuration and pregnancy for example are more difficult to meet, particularly during dzud conditions. During a family visit in Erdenemandal, a mother and daughter said that they rarely visit the soum centre and so sometimes do not have access to sanitary pads when they need them, and use other cloth instead. Pregnant

⁸ Animal prices data, National Statistics Office

women are entitled to receive a government allowance and must also visit the aimag centre for two check-ups, but the lack of phone connectivity, transportation and distance to travel is a significant barrier to them accessing this support.

All of the bagh doctors in the soums assessed are female and use motorcycles to deliver their medical services to the local population, but the isolation, particularly in the winter, poses risks to their safety and security.

VII. Conclusion

Save the Children's assessment has found that the most vulnerable households, particularly herder households, are already struggling to cope with the impact of a second severe winter in a row; most herders have a loan from the bank and buy food on credit from local markets. Children – especially those from herders' families - are expected to be particularly affected by this crisis; the usually long journey to school at the beginning of term is now more dangerous, their schools and dormitories are incredibly cold, and respiratory infections are common, but access to healthcare is very poor. With their parents' struggling financially, children are arriving at school without warm clothes and without money to properly look after themselves, not to mention the psychological impacts of being separated from their parents for longer than expected with little or no means of communication.

While it is not expected that the scale of the current dzud will reach 2010 levels in terms of livestock losses on a national level, it is very likely that the severity of the situation will be similar to last years' dzud. In response to this situation, Save the Children proposes to implement a multi-sector programme aiming to protect livelihoods of most vulnerable herder households while ensuring basic education and health services are provided to affected children.

Annex

Annex I – Recommendations by sector

Phase I: February – May 2017

The first phase of the response should involve the following components:

- FSL:
 - Distribution of a veterinary package including livestock feed (preferably fodder), barometer, multivitamin, mineral lick, fish oil etc. to the most vulnerable herder households
 - Unconditional multipurpose cash transfers to the vulnerable herder households to complement fodder support
- Education (all aspects):
 - Provision of coal and essential heating system spares to schools and dormitories
 - Provision of insulation materials to schools and dormitories
 - Compensatory classes for children who miss class as a result of the dzud
 - Provision of either a rented vehicle, fuel, or cash, to schools to cover safe transportation of children to and from the soum centre
 - Provision of a landline phone in school dormitories
 - Provision of first aid kits including natural supplements and basic medical supplies
 - Provision of WaSH items including bio toilets, water purifiers and hygiene kits to children in school dormitories
 - Provision of wooden (portable) sinks in dormitory rooms, plus hand sanitiser and disinfection chemicals, and lights and locks for outside toilets to schools and dormitories
- Health and Nutrition:
 - Support for costs related fuel/petrol, per diem and repair/replacement for ambulance car parts to soum health centre to outreach health service including medical check-up, monitoring for pregnant and lactating women, children under 5, disabled people and elders from isolated herder households
 - Provision of essential equipment (e.g. thermometers, stethoscopes) and supplies to bagh doctors, plus emergency protection items for their journey by motorcycle
 - Provision of essential medications, supplies and equipment for children to soum health centres including for example humidifiers for inhalation to treat respiratory tract infection
 - Provision of vitamins (A, C, D), minerals (iron, calcium, zinc) and nutritious supplements for children under 5 and pregnant and lactating mothers to soum health centres

Phase 2: May – December 2017

- FSL:
 - Potential re-stocking activity for households that lose a significant number of livestock but who have not yet dropped out of herding (could be done through re-distribution of animals between households)

- Potential animal husbandry and DRR/financial/life skills training to build capacity of vulnerable herders. Experience sharing exercise between herders both experienced and less experienced herders
- CP:
 - Provision of Psychological First Aid (PFA) to vulnerable herders' children, especially those living in "child-led" households
 - Training of educators, teachers, social workers and local decision-makers on child protection in emergencies, including developing a plan of action
- Education (all aspects):
 - Compensatory classes for children who have missed classes and are behind from their peers
 - Cash distribution for education items
 - Delivery of DRR training for school staff and children in collaboration with NEMA and soum emergency response teams
 - Provision of school DRR grants based on the risks identified by children
 - Potential renovation of WaSH facilities in schools and dormitories, including ensuring access to safe water and latrines
- Health and Nutrition:
 - Supply equipment to the soum health centres for small children's diagnosis and treatment, including for example a baby Ambu bag, suction apparatus (for nose and mouth), a blood pressure machine for small children, Emergency Obstetrics kit, breath counter and stethoscope to exam small children
 - Develop a training package for Education, Information and Communication on community health and nutrition and provide trainings to herders and parents from other particularly vulnerable households
 - Conduct training for health providers to build their capacity to respond to healthcare emergencies during extreme winter conditions
 - Organise training on hygiene to school and kindergarten children (Hand-washing, personal hygiene knowledge, etc.) and provide hand sanitizers. Dental care and oral training required for school staff and children

Further recommendations (beyond dzud response)

- Pastoral land management/ long-term livelihood protection for herders in Mongolia
- Improvements to heating systems in schools and school dormitories
- Improvements to WaSH infrastructure in schools and health centres
- Specific DRR/ resilience training for girls and in particular female-headed-child-led households
- CP trainings for peer educators at schools and support for parents and teachers on encouraging positive behaviour of children

Annex II – Assessment Team

	NAME	BACKGROUND	TITLE
1	Telmen. E	Assessment team leader	Child Poverty and Humanitarian Programs Manager, SC
2	Burenjargal. B	FSL	Humanitarian Coordinator, SC
3	Tamir. S	Education	JPF project officer, SC
4	Jargalmaa. R	Health, Nutrition & CP	Consultant, SC
5	Frances. K	Generalist	Response Coordinator, SC
6	Uyanga. E	Phone survey coordinator	Project Officer, SC
7	Evan. S	Media	Regional Media Manager, SC
8	Khulan. M	Media	Advocacy and Communications Manager, SC
9	Terrence. E	Media	Journalist, Reuters
10	Narantuya. R	Field Coordinator	Arkhangai field Coordinator, SC
11	Tavkhaidorj	LEMA	LEMA officer, Arkhangai aimag
12	Bayarsaikhan	Driver	
13	Oyunjargal	Driver	
14	Shinjirbat	Driver	

Annex III – Data

Last Five Years Dzud Occurrences in Arkhangai aimag

2017.01.12

No	Date	Soum name	Work force		# of loss livestock	Loss (MNT)	Expense (MNT)
			People	Mechanism			
1	2010	entire soum (19)	433	83	1,085,777	67,000,000,000	500,000,000
2	2011	7 soum (Ulziit, Ugii-nuur, Khotont, Tsetserleg, Khashaat, Khangai, Tsakhir)	131	39	60,901	3,836,000	22,800,000
3	2013	entire soum (19)	107	20	29,353	8,805,650,000	188,749,200
4	2016	7 soum (Khangai, Tariat, Tsakhir, Chuluut, Undur-Ulaan, Ulziit, Ugii-nuur)	443	62	101,630	18,187,370,000	265,262,600
		Total	1,114	204	1,277,661	93,996,856,000	976,811,800

Analysis by: NEMA director lieutenant colonel Erdenebaatar. D

2016-2017 school year Arkhangai aimag

2017.01.11

№	School name	Total students #	Dormitory kids #		Child-led family #	Out of total school children the herder's children #
			Total dormitory #	Herder's kid		
1	Battsengel	502	43	40	42	354
2	Bulgan	211	61	55	5	150
3	Jargalant	729	48	46	8	549
4	Ikhtamir	648	133	90		263
5	Murun	83	20	19	0	73
6	Tariat	760	130	95	30	504
7	Tuvshruuleh	493	97	86	32	280
8	Khairkhan	646	60	50		393
9	Khaluun us	20	1	1	0	15
10	Khangai	363	49	41	0	240
11	Khanui	32	25	24	0	29
12	Khashaat	506	171	146		336
13	Khoolt	46	20	20	0	44
14	Khotont	745	200	195	28	553
15	Tsakhir	431	44	31	6	225
16	Tsenkher	694	122	97		418
17	Tsetserleg	643	138	137	9	479
18	Chuluut	620	89	82	98	423
19	Erdenemandal	1019	194	188	14	742
20	Ugiinuur	527	120	120	38	417
21	Ulziit	641	106	106	21	396
22	Undurulaan	675	121	110		472
23	Undursant	64	40	15	0	27
	Total	17081	2245	1949	331	7382

Survey on heating and electricity condition of Dzud affected and near Dzud soum schools of
Arkhangai aimag

2017.01.12

No	Soum name	heating			electricity			debt of 2016	stock by Jan 2017 (ton)
		2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017		
1	Erdene-Mandal (school and dorm)	25,237,000	34,960,200	25,237,000	10,018,400	18,096,000	9,796,000	-	140
2	Tuvshruuleh (school and dorm)	36,009,100	36,009,100	36,009,100	5,660,500	6,509,600	6,905,100	438,000	10
3	Ugiinuur (school and dorm)	38,286,000	54,486,000	49,286,000	4,657,000	8,254,300	5,355,600	3,600,000	10
4	Ulziit (school and dorm)	20,105,600	20,105,600	20,105,600	4,433,400	5,098,400	5,098,400	1,700,000	20
5	Khashaat (school and dorm)	24,477,800	25,536,000	28,403,000	5,837,000	6,712,600	6,712,600	-	6
6	Tsetserleg (school and dorm)	25,324,100	25,324,100	25,324,100	6,988,900	8,037,200	8,037,200	-	180
7	Battsengel (school and dorm)	24,977,500	31,477,300	29,977,300	5,072,700	5,833,600	5,833,600	-	25
8	Khangai (school and dorm)	27,296,000	28,024,900	22,796,000	4,629,400	5,579,300	4,541,800	-	20
9	Khotont (school and dorm)	48,844,100	49,844,100	49,844,100	5,372,400	6,178,300	6,178,300	746,500	17
10	Jargalant (school and dorm)	5,685,600	5,685,600	5,685,600	3,968,800	4,564,100	4,564,100	-	20 truck

Survey by: Education Cultural Department of Arkhangai aimag

Annex IV - Assessment pictures



Picture #1 Lifelong herder, Baatarkhuu.T in his winter camp, Erdenemandal soum



Picture #2 Child lead family, Khairkhan soum, Enkhzaya.N 17 years old, lives with her 5 cousins



Picture #3 Meeting with Aimag deputy governor and aimag authorities



Picture #4 Ulziit soum kindergarten, no heating system



Picture #5 Livestock carcass, Arkhangai aimag



Picture #6 Children are studying with outfits in the classroom due to the classroom temperature, in Erdenemandal soum



Picture #7 Condition of Erdenemandal school dormitory



Picture #8 Herder household visit, including 8 month pregnant mother unable to access government financial support due to cost and distance from soum centre



Picture #9 Road condition to Arkhangai aimag

Annex V – Summary of findings of Bayan-Ulgii needs assessment, 19th – 22nd January, 2017

1. Overview

Staff from SC, Bayan-ulgii's Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA) and Education department joined this assessment. The majority (90%) of Bayan-ulgii's population (100,000) is Kazakh ethnic minority, so most children and some adults don't speak Mongolian, thus a translator who can speak Kazakh, Mongolian and English was needed for in order to conduct interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). There are 13 soums (86 bagh) and 1 village in Bayan-ulgii. In the education system, primary education is mainly taught in Kazakh, and towards the secondary level, it shifts to Mongolian, since the curriculum is the same as other aimags in Mongolia. Education materials to support the bilingual education system are severely lacking.

The Local Emergency Management Agency's (LEMA's) requested the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to classify 5 soums as dzud affected, whereas only 2 of which were classified according to NEMA's data. There are also some baghs of soums severely affected by the dzud but not included in the data. When it comes to school children, elder children have to study in the soum center instead of their home bagh. Thus, even though their bagh is much more affected by the dzud than the soum center, support for children in soum or aimag is needed since their parents are affected (for example there is a need for transportation support for Sagsai soum school children from Dayan bagh and aimag center Mongolian school children who come from all over the aimag, including dzud affected soums).

2. Key findings

The assessment was conducted to identify needs relating to Education, but covered the following areas:

2.1 Herders' livelihoods

Since 2014 there has been animal disease in Ulgii, and last winter (2015/2016) many herders lost their animals. As a result herders' income has been significantly reduced, meaning that they haven't been able to prepare well for winter by buying hay and fodder for their animals, clothes for their children, medicines, etc. Herders spend most of their income on food only, although they are only eating meat and flour. This is also the main reason why they can't pick up or bring their children to school. A family who lives in Dayan bagh needs 30,000 MNT, whilst a family who lives in Zagastnuur bagh needs 7,000–10,000 MNT one way for a taxi for their children to go to school in the soum center. Based on our discussion, the most needed support for herders is: cash, hay and fodder, and medicines. They also reported not having enough heating at home.

2.2 Health

Due to their lack of fuel and medicines, herders are not accessing sufficient healthcare. They call the bagh doctor only when they need. As a result of a lack of health knowledge and lack of money, they also don't have sufficient medicines and vitamins for their children (all families whom we met haven't provided vitamins to their children for the last 2-3 years). As a result, many of the children

are malnourished and suffer from deficiencies leading to rickets and stunting. On top of this, many children are suffering from flu and pneumonia due to the cold weather and lack of protection from it (in terms of warm clothes, heating, immunity). The bagh doctor is the only person who is able to provide healthcare to herders, and children living in dormitories don't see the bagh doctor at all. The bagh doctors have stethoscopes and blood pressure equipment, no first aid kits or medicines.

2.3 Education

Interviewees included 5 government officials, 16 school staff and 33 herder children. Overall, needs were similar to those identified by SC's Arkhangai assessment (Jan 10-14, 2017). The summary by activity is as follows:

- **Children missing classes:** Based on school staff and students, herder children (mainly male) tend to help their parents before/after winter and spring breaks for 1 week up to 2 semester (some of them already missed 1-2 weeks and they tend to miss even more after spring break). Some teachers help them to catch up but on a voluntary basis, thus staff and students agreed the importance of systematic Compensatory Classes.
- **Preschool education of herders' children:** There was a strong need for pre-school education, demonstrated by 2 family visits where the 5 year old children are not attending kindergarten, even though there is a kindergarten nearby.
- **School Environment:** Identified needs for the school environment were heating support, transportation for break time, provision of health kits (first aid and medicine), electricity, communication and WaSH, among which heating was the most needed. This result mostly corresponds with SC's Arkhangai assessment. However, some needs are different because of each school's size and specific problem (e.g. need for bio toilet, electricity, hand sanitizer, etc.). Thus, cash for school can be an option, which has to be decided by balancing with other aimag's situation, plus its feasibility.
- **Education items for children:** Since many parents affected by dzud (especially those with many school-aged children) tend to have difficulty buying items including school materials, which affect children's school attendance, there is a need to provide this support around September and October, according to interviewed school staff and children, as such support is important for education continuity.
- **School Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR):** Based on LEMA and the Education department, a school DRR plan is required in each school, but school staff and students interviewed mentioned that there is no DRR-related activity in place (some teachers even said that there was no school DRR plan). Therefore, DRR training in soum schools is recommended.

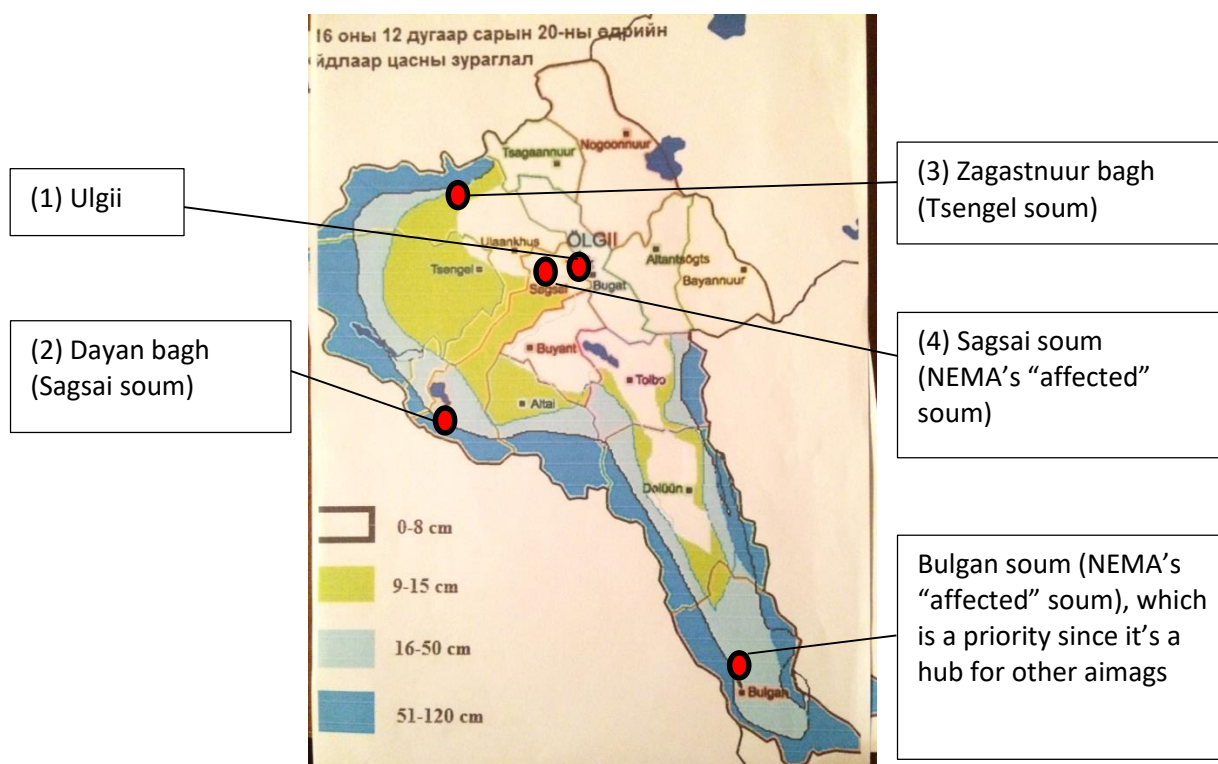
2.4 Protection

- 100% of interviewees reported the need for psychological first aid to be provided for children. However, the impact of the current situation on childrens' psychological wellbeing is not yet visible, mainly because students' parents are not yet experiencing serious animal losses. What children mostly care about at the moment is their parents' feelings.
- Zagasnuur bagh (Tsengel soum) was severely affected by the dzud but the bagh has no phone connection, which causes considerable delay when help from outside the bagh is needed (e.g. in a medical emergency).

A detailed note of interviews and visits is available on request
Assessment Team and Plan

- Human Resource and Admin Manager - Delgerzaya. Kh
- Japanese Grant Program Manager - Hiroshi Okamoto
- Education Program Manager – Gereltuya. Ts
- Translator - Asel
- Bayan-Ulgii Education Department
- Bayan-Ulgii LEMA

Assessment trip map



#	Date	Venue	Interviewees
1	Jan 19 (Thu)	(1) Ulgii (aimag centor)	Education department
2			Governor
3			Mongolian School
4			Deputy director of LEMA, director of KHAAN bank, deputy director of aimag health department, supplier of fodder, salespeople of market
5			Ulaankhud bagh governor (Altai soum) at hotel
6	Jan 20 (Fri)	(2) Dayan Bagh (Sagsai soum)	Governor
7			School staff
8			Students
9			Bagh doctor, 3 HH families, bagh governor
10			Herder HH with 4 children (1 has mental health disability)
11	Jan 21 (Sat)	(3) Zagast Nuur bagh (Tsengel soum)	Bagh school staff
12			Students
13			Bagh governor, bagh doctors, 2 HHs

14		(4) Sagsai soum	School staff
15			School students
16			Governor, director of soum hospital
17			Sagsai soum herders
18	Jan 22 (Sun)	(1) Ulgii (aimag center)	Mongolian school
19			Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities
20			Director of aimag health department, director of Agriculture and vet department of aimag
21			Education department

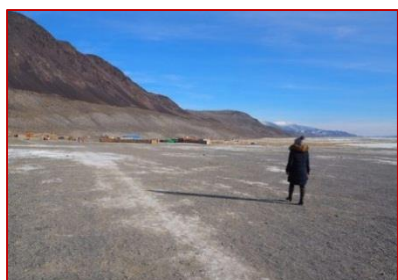
Assessment pictures (Bayan-Ulgii aimag)



Picture 1. Dormitory children of Zagastnuur bagh of Tsengel soum



Picture 2. Road condition to Dayan bagh of Sagsai



Picture 3. In Tsengel soum, children need to walk 1 km to reach their school dormitory



Picture 4. Dormitory lighting in Tsengel soum



Picture 5. Horse with mouth protection from the iced ground, Dayan bagh of Sagsai soum



Picture 6. FGD with school children in aimag center school No 2.



Picture 7. Road agency is working to remove snow from the local roads, on the way to Dayan bagh of Sagsai soum