

## **Project “Ecological Education Training for rural Communities in Bayankhongor aimag”**

The Ecological Education Center of the National University of Mongolia (EEC) had implemented the project “Ecological Education Training for rural Communities in Bayankhongor aimag” on behalf of the SAM-project of the Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) during the time period from August 20<sup>th</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup> 2012 in Bayankhongor aimag. The objective of this project was to increase the general ecological education within the population of Bayankhongor aimag and to improve the management structures of the aimag’s eco-center and was conducted in three parts:

1. Realization of a field trip to get to know the local situation and to determine the training demand
2. Implementation of trainings and seminars according to the demand
3. Elaboration of brochures and posters about mining and its consequences for the environment and health and development of a concept for the eco-center

### **1. Realization of a field trip**

The field trip took place from August 25<sup>th</sup> until August 29<sup>th</sup> 2012 in the two soums, Bayan-Ovoo and Bumbugur. The purpose of the field trip was:

- to familiarize with the situation of artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in two soums of the Bayankhongor aimag
- the interrogation of local people and officials about ASM and environmental issues
- to get information for determining the content of the trainings by speaking to responsible persons of the local SDC office, as well as of governmental and non-governmental organizations



Interviews and interrogation process

### **Local situation and the demand for trainings can be summarized as follows:**

- Environmental situation in Bayankhongor aimag: Based on our interrogation, mining and non-sustainable use of natural resources are the two main environmental problems of the Aimag.
- Demand for trainings: The noticeable and eye-catching influence of mining on the environment is already known to everybody, but townsmen don't know about the more complex coherences like the consequences of current mining activities and non-sustainable use of natural resources on the future of the environmental health and for future generations. The most in demand topics for trainings are biological land rehabilitation, use of other natural resources, alternative sources of income and cooperative working methods.
- Educational level of possible training participants: During the interrogation, we noticed that the general educational level is quite low. Especially their capability of expression in written form is very bad. For the elaboration of the trainings we should design them as simple as possible to make sure that all the participants will comprehend the trainings' content. Also the training material has to be easy to understand and include examples of the townsmen daily life.



“Shirkhin” mining site at Bumbugur soum and  
Mining site of “Tsagaan Tsakhir” in Bayan-Ovoo soum, Bayankhongor Aimag

## **2. Implementation of trainings and seminars**

The EEC organized the training tour “Small-scale mining and my environment” to conduct trainings and seminars for local townsmen in Bayankhongor aimag during September 21<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The objective of these training programs was to create environmental consciousness through ecological education, while the aim of the seminar was the improvement of the eco-centers management. Therefore the trainings and the seminar were held in different ways and addressed different target groups.

### **Team of the training tour:**

- Mr. Dr. Ts. Batchuluun (director of the EEC)
- Ms. Dr. R. Sunjidmaa (EEC senior expert)
- Ms. M.Sc. J. Oyunbileg (EEC expert)
- Ms. M.Sc. V. Albrecht (EEC expert)
- Mr. Prof. Kh. Terbish (NUM, School of Biology and Biotechnology (SBB), Department of Ecology)
- Mr. Prof. D. Suran (NUM, SBB, Department of Botany)
- Mr. Prof. Baatarbileg (NUM, SBB, Department of Forestry)

### **Training “Small-scale mining and my environment”**

The trainings under the title “Small-scale mining and my environment” were held to create environmental consciousness and ecological responsibility amongst local townsmen and children of Bayankhongor aimag. The trainings were conducted in the soums of Bayan-Ovoo, Bumbugur, Galuut and Jargalant. In each soum, the trainings were divided into two groups, one for adults and one for children from 12 years and above.

The training content was elaborated based on the results of the field trip in August. As the most demanded topics for the majority of the respondents were alternative revenues, the cultivation of fodder plants, nature and wildlife, land rehabilitation and the optimal management of winter camps and stand posts, therefore the themes biological land rehabilitation, sustainable and cooperative management of natural resources as well as interdependence of man and nature, were integrated into the training program. For the children, a program including the benefits and consequences of mining and the ecological footprint was elaborated and realized within the scope of training and along different nature-discovery stations.



Professors of the NUM’s School for Biology and Biotechnology conducting trainings in Bayankhongor aimag

## Seminar for the improvement of the eco-center management

The seminar for the improvement of the eco-center management took place in the Aimag center from September 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The objective of the seminar was to improve the process structure of the Bayankhongor aimag's eco center and, by this means, to assure a sustainable mode of working. Three representatives of each soum (total 27 participants) were chosen for participating in the trainings during this seminar, along with experts from the aimag's Governor's Office, Office for Environment and Tourism, the Office for Education and Culture, the Office for Protected Areas as well as some teachers from Bayankhongor aimag center.



Environmental education for children was conducted on interactive mobile learning-stations

## RESULTS

The results of the realized trainings and other activities of the project can be summarized as follows:

- In total 275 people took part in our trainings: 175 townsmen (Small-scale miners, governmental staff, experts of NGOs and others) attended the adult trainings and 100 pupils from above 12 years of age attended the children trainings.
- The environmental knowledge of the participating children was increased according to the soum by the factor 2-2.7. The knowledge of the children from Bayan-Ovoo soum, whose general education level is quite low, was increased from 10% to 27%, whereas in Jargalant soum, where the general education level is considerably higher, the percentage was raised from 21% to 57%.
- The fact that the eco-board was founded under the auspices of the Aimag Governor was an important result and assures that eco-board will also be respected by other governmental organizations. The eco-board's operational plan for 2013 was jointly elaborated by all the seminars' participants and organizers.



Seminar for the improvement of eco-center management



Presentations of ideas for eco-center activities

- The EEC elaborated a concept for the management of the eco-center, an operational plan, and financing options to allow a sustainable work.
- Simplified posters for children and adults on “Mining and my environment” were elaborated.
- A brochure “Mining and my environment” was elaborated by the EEC for the public.

Ecological Education Center

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