

September 2014

# THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Mongolia



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# Editor's Note

## SAIN BAINA UU?

Welcome to the September edition of our newsletter for Projects Abroad Mongolia. On September 1, a new academic year begins throughout the country. It's always exciting and inspires us to set greater goals.

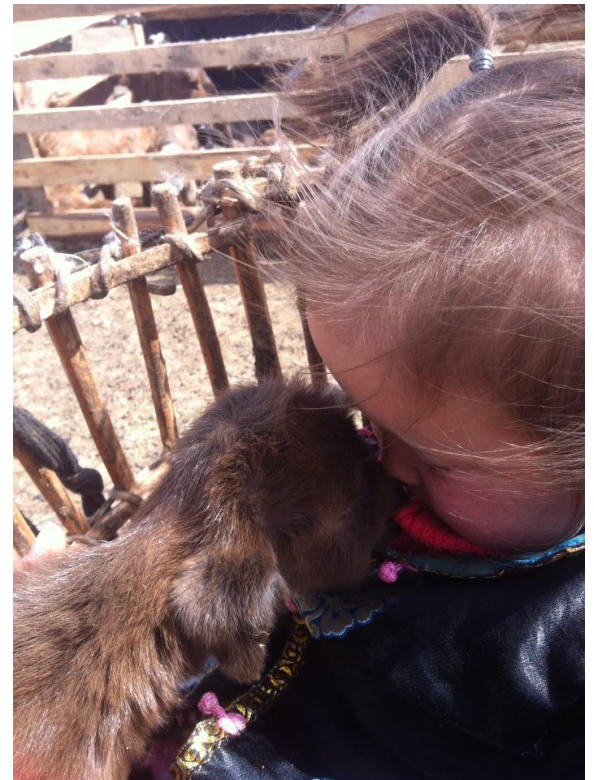
Beautiful fall is here; the trees are changing color and adding more beauty to nature. The weather is so pleasant to walk around in; it's much cooler in the early morning and late evening.

This September issue will give you a further insight into our culture and is filled with project updates, volunteer stories and events! Get a glimpse of what it would be like to volunteer here in the "Land of Blue Sky".

Have a wonderful month,  
Projects Abroad Mongolia Team

Send your stories, opinions, funny anecdotes and pictures (absolutely anything you want to share) to Azaa.

Email: [mongoliasocialmanagers@projects-abroad.org](mailto:mongoliasocialmanagers@projects-abroad.org)



# VOLUNTEER STORIES

## Volunteer Story by Laura Van Cauwenberge

I'm a Belgian midwifery student and, ever since I started my studies, I have wanted to do an internship abroad. However, it has been a real battle to be able to do this. A battle filled with research, essays, motivation letters and even an interview in front of a panel of three teachers. However, in spite of all these struggles, I did it and now I'm in Mongolia, the land of eternal blue sky!

When I left Belgian soil, I didn't know what to expect. Even after all of the research that I had done, a lot was still left to my imagination. The moment I landed in Ulaanbaatar, I knew that the greatest adventure of my life was about to begin.



Over the nine weeks that I've spent here, I've seen many things and I've travelled to some magical places. I arrived in July, a few days after the Naadam festival. At first I was a little bit sad that I had missed something that is such a big part of the Mongolian culture. So I decided to see the three national sports at a later date. I went to a wrestling competition at the wrestling palace and to a horse riding and archery competition in the countryside with a few other volunteers.

Just like all of the other volunteers in Mongolia, I stayed with a Mongolian host family. However, there was something extra special about my stay as in August, my host relatives got married and I was invited! I have to say that it was a magical day. Early in the morning, the groom left the apartment soon before a hairdresser and make-up artist arrived on our doorstep. The hairdresser did the bride's hair and those of her close female family members. After that, it was time for make-up. Even I got my make-up done by the professional artist. I helped the bride get dressed, the finishing touches were done and then it was time to leave for the wedding palace. Everybody looked stunning! There was a short ceremony before we went to take pictures at all the important wedding backdrops in UB: the wedding palace, Sukhbaatar Square, the government building and the big golden Buddha. After that it was time for dinner and, of course, karaoke.

Along with other volunteers, I was able to travel a bit in Mongolia. I saw beautiful Terelj, where I slept in a ger for the first time and rode a camel. I also went to an interesting 13<sup>th</sup> century park, which was devoted to the Genghis Khaan era, and I also visited the enchanting Kövsköl lake way up in the north. I saw so many beautiful places and did so many memorable things that it is impossible to write them all down. I'll let the pictures speak for themselves.

Even though nobody at my work placement in UB spoke proper English, I've done and learnt so many things. Did you know that Mongolians call their midwife "eej", which means mother? As a midwife, you are also considered the mother of that baby when you deliver it. This means that I have 14 Mongolian children! Secretly, I like my job even more now. It is such a lovely way of thinking.



At the end of my placement, I donated 15 sterilisable amnio hooks (equipment to manually break the mother's water) as the same one was being used for all the women. In Europe, they use a different sterile hook for each woman.

The hospital workers were very grateful for the donation. I'm happy that they were pleased with the gift because I put a lot of work into the donation. Before I left for Mongolia, I baked around 370 cupcakes and sold them at my college and to friends. Then I had a lot of trouble receiving the package that I ordered online in Mongolia before I left. Luckily, it arrived on time!

There is finally only one thing left to say: Mongolian food is certainly something different. Whereas a typical European fridge is filled with beautiful, usually almost fatless pieces of meat and a lot of vegetables, a Mongolian fridge is the complete opposite. In Mongolia, they eat meat with flour and more meat. The fridge is filled with animal parts complete with all the fat and bone. Vegetables are almost never served but I'm so happy that my host family added some vegetables to dishes just for me. When I go back to Belgium, I might go vegetarian for one week.

So I can conclude that my Mongolian adventure was certainly something out of the ordinary. Projects Abroad gave me a great experience and were also always there to help when I needed something done. I wouldn't have missed out on these nine and a half weeks for all the money in the world.

## インターン体験記 藤原 嶺

僕は、大学3年時の2014年9月の1ヶ月間、モンゴルの首都・ウランバートルにある国営の通信社とラジオ局でインターンをしました。モンゴルを選んだ理由は、日本人があまり行かないアウェーの地だからこそ失敗を多く経験でき、自分の成長につながると思ったからです。実際にモンゴルでインターンをしてみると、言葉や文化の違いなどわからないことだらけで、数多くの失敗を経験しました。ただ、それが日本での生活や将来にとっては、とても重要なことだと思います。もうひとつの理由が、僕の将来の希望の職種（マスコミ関係、特に記者）の仕事を体験できるためです。モンゴルでのジャーナリズムインターンでは、日本語を使って仕事ができます。通信社では、日本語の新聞を作るセクションで働きました。主な仕事内容は、原稿の校正、取材、記事の執筆でした。前・駐モンゴル日本大使への取材など、日本のインターンではできないような実践的な経験を積めました。自分が書いた記事がこの国営の新聞に載ったときは感動しました。元新聞記者の日本人の方にご指導いただき、記者を目指す僕としては非常に勉強になりました。





発展途上で、日本に比べると小規模なモンゴルという国だからこそできる仕事だと思います。またラジオ局での仕事は、日本語のラジオ番組を作ることでした。仕事内容は、リスナーからのお便りの返事を書くこと、取材、番組制作、ラジオ DJ などでした。ただの一大学生が、国営のラジオ番組に出演して DJ を務めるなど、なかなか経験できることではないと思います。どちらの会社にも、日本語が上手なモンゴル人の方がいて、言葉にはまったく困らなかったです。また、プロジェクトアブロードを通じて各国からやってくるインターン生達との交流もいい経験になりました。

英語で会話することで英語の上達はもちろんのこと、あらゆる国のひとの話を聞いて視野が広がりました。こう書くと「英語ができなきゃ暮らしていけないんじゃないか」と思われるかもしれませんが、そんなことはありません。僕の英語は日常会話も怪しいくらいのレベルですが、ノリでなんとかかなりました。言葉はコミュニケーションのツールに過ぎないということを改めて感じました。また、日本人が気にしがちなことに、治安の問題があると思います。僕は、イメージしていたよりモンゴルは安全な国だと感じました。昼間はどこでも安全に歩けました。夜は気をつけなければいけません。僕は基本タクシーで移動したので問題なかったです。バス内にはスリが多いなど油断はしてはいけませんが、警戒しすぎるほどではないと思います。モンゴルという国はとても面白い国です。意外と日本と似た部分があれば、まったく違う部分もあります。「モンゴル＝草原」というイメージで行けば、衝撃を受けることでしょう。いろいろ書きたいことはありますが、それはモンゴルに行ってからの楽しみということで。

(笑) 最後に、僕は週末に 2 回ほど小旅行をしました。田舎は、モンゴルのイメージそのままです。日本ではありえないスケールを肌で感じました。日本で小さなことを気にしている自分がバカらしく思えてきました。週末にいろいろなところへ出かけるのも、リフレッシュになっていいでしょう。さまざまな経験をし、少しはたくましくなれた 1 ヶ月間でした。モンゴルでのインターンや生活に関して何か聞きたいことがあれば、プロジェクトアブロードを通して僕に連絡いただけたらと思います。

## Project Updates

### Dirty Day

All our volunteers did a wonderful thing for the children at the National Center for Maternal and Child Health by drawing and painting pictures on the walls of the surgical department. Volunteers sacrificed their day off to work very hard for the children. Thanks to your beautiful work, the children will no longer be scared on their way to surgery.



# Volunteers in Action



## Bury Rosaire student gains worthwhile experience at a teaching project while volunteering in Mongolia

Seventeen year old Amaury Baudoin, a senior at Bury Rosaire high school in Paris, decided to take some time to volunteer over his summer holiday. Eager to participate in something challenging as well as to work with children, he signed up with Projects Abroad and worked on a care project in Mongolia for one month.

"I really like to help people around me," explains Amaury. "I, therefore, wanted to do something useful for other people and to make a difference in a community. When I was surfing the net, I stumbled across the Projects Abroad website and really wanted to seize this opportunity to help others."

Amaury's placement was at a local kindergarten where he assisted the teachers with their daily routines and interacted with the children by teaching them English and playing different games with them. As there are not many assistants at the school, volunteers are really appreciated. They are able to give children the individual attention that they need while also teaching them new things.

Twice a week, Amaury also taught English to disabled young people at the Natsagdorj Library. Furthermore, he organized an origami class for the children at 'My Family' orphanage, which is a home for over 20 orphan children.

"My stay in Mongolia was an eye-opening experience. I realized how blessed I am because of everything I have in my life - a home, lovely parents and the opportunity to get an education at school. The most important thing I learned from my experience is to stop thinking just about myself and to think about others instead and smile at people around me."

Apart from his volunteer work, he enjoyed staying with a Mongolian host family and experiencing life in a new country, a new language and a different culture on the other side of the world. He spent his free time with new friends, travelling to the beautiful Mongolian countryside and participating in events organised by Projects Abroad.

At the end of his project, Amaury explained that the experience he gained at Projects Abroad Mongolia would help him in the future: "This was really a good experience for me. All the wholehearted contributions that I was able to offer to the children and everything that I've learned from this experience will broaden my CV and will help me to stand out as a better human being."

After having spent one month in Mongolia, Amaury advises future volunteers: "Smile and spread your bright spirit. It is the cheapest and the best gift that you can offer people in your daily life. Volunteering can be one of the best ways to help to open your mind and show charity."

"All in all, this summer was the most rewarding and memorable experience I have had in my life. I have been studying at school for 15 years and, after this trip, I realised that I knew nothing."