

KEY POINTS

- In the *Ensuring Inclusiveness and Service Delivery for Persons with Disabilities* project, the Government of Mongolia is addressing important economic, social, and rights issues concerning persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the country, and demonstrating commitment to international rights frameworks and goals on disability.
- PWDs typically lack access to education, health care, social protection, livelihood, and employment. Households with PWDs tend to have higher rates of poverty than other households.
- Current disability assessments follow an outdated, narrow medical approach, and tend to underreport disability prevalence, leaving many PWDs without access to protection and services. Early diagnostic and intervention services are largely unavailable.
- The project will improve services and create livelihood opportunities for PWDs and provide them further support through reforms in social welfare. ADB is helping to finance this project with a concessional loan and grant approved in 2017. The project is ADB's first loan focusing exclusively on disability.

SOCIAL PROTECTION BRIEF

Inclusive Service Delivery for Persons with Disabilities in Mongolia

DISABILITY IN MONGOLIA

Estimates of disability prevalence in Mongolia tend to be underreported, especially among older people, girls, and women, thus leaving a substantial number of PWDs without the necessary services and protection. Early identification of disability is inadequate and current disability assessments follow an outdated, narrow medical approach. Many people perceive PWDs to be incapable of living independently and a burden to society.

The 2014 household socioeconomic survey in Mongolia shows that households with PWDs have a poverty rate of 42%, more than twice that of households without PWDs (18%). PWDs spend more on health services than those without special needs. These costs include medicines and diagnostic procedures, as well as transportation associated with visiting the capital city Ulaanbaatar for tests that are not available in *aimag* (province) health centers. People with intellectual disabilities are particularly worse off, as are households with more than one PWD. About 43% of children with disabilities (CWDs) aged 6–18 years cannot read, and 15% can read with difficulty. In contrast, only 4% cannot read and 8% can read with difficulty among those aged 6–18 years without disabilities. Parents regard education services for CWDs as of low quality; disabled people's organizations (DPOs) report poor access for PWDs to tertiary education. The labor force participation rate for PWDs aged 15–59 years is only 28%, compared to 69% for the rest of the population in the same age bracket.¹

Early diagnostic and intervention services for most CWDs are either unavailable or of poor quality. Limited access to education at all levels translates to PWDs being poorly prepared for employment. PWDs face barriers getting employed because they lack skills, and companies are not equipped to provide jobs for PWDs.

¹ Based on the 2014 Labor Force Survey as cited in the project's Summary Poverty Reduction and Social Strategy. ADB. 2017. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan and Administration of Grant to Mongolia for the Ensuring Inclusiveness and Service Delivery for Persons with Disabilities Project*. Manila.

Disability puts women at a greater disadvantage in society. The disability rate for women, particularly those with severe disability, is higher than for men at any age. However, men are 28% more likely to be reported as disabled than women. While 30% of men aged 15–59 years with disabilities are employed, only 25% of women with disabilities work. Moreover, 80% of caregivers for PWDs are women, most of whom do not receive adequate social protection and support services.

Physical access by PWDs to public buildings, including government offices, hospitals, and schools, and to transportation facilities is constrained by poor enforcement of universal design standards and limited investments in this area. This adds to the difficulties PWDs face in accessing basic social services and participating in social life, and functioning independently.

Access to affordable orthopedic equipment and assistive devices developed through advances in technology is also very limited, thus reducing the opportunity for PWDs to compensate for their disabilities, improve their well-being, and increase their chances of success at school or in the workplace.

The successive and persistent barriers faced by PWDs underscore the need for life cycle interventions and approaches to ensure successful inclusion in society.

BEYOND WELFARE—CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

In 2017, ADB approved a concessional loan of \$25 million and a grant from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction of \$2 million to help finance a project that will support the Government of Mongolia to address major economic, social, and rights issues of PWDs in Mongolia. The project, *Ensuring Inclusiveness and Service Delivery for Persons with Disabilities*, aims to ensure access to services and employment for PWDs to increase their autonomy and contribution to the economy and society in general. The project will support the government's compliance to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the *Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*, and its implementation of the new Law on the Rights of PWDs.²

The project addresses five key areas for services and support throughout the life of CWDs and PWDs:

- **Early identification of children with disabilities.** The project facilitates the shift from a medical to a social model in identifying CWDs by broadening the skills of the people involved in early identification. The effects of disability can be

minimized and possibly prevented by appropriately supported early interventions, and such interventions can lead to greater ability and inclusion in education, employment, and society in general. Early detection and delivery of better and more appropriate services for CWDs may also allow family members, especially women who provide the majority of care, to take a more active role in the social and economic fabric of society. Improved services will include individual case management by disability social workers, portage, physiotherapy, speech and occupational therapy, assistive devices, personal assistants, and other independent living services.

- **Improved service delivery for persons with disabilities.** The project will implement an interactive parent–child–facilitator education in early childhood. It will establish six model *aimag* development and rehabilitation centers, training centers, and introduce a national curriculum for occupational and speech therapy, physiotherapy, orthopedic technicians, and disability social workers. This will be supported by strengthening the role of social workers in support of PWDs and establish a PWD-dedicated hotline on information, counselling, and referrals (for PWDs). Early detection supported by appropriate interventions and service delivery are the starting points for ensuring access to society, education, and employment for CWDs.
- **Improved access to the physical environment.** The project will help strengthen the capacity of decision makers and institutions involved in developing and enforcing the legal and regulatory frameworks on physical accessibility of basic services (infrastructure, transportation, and information). It will also ensure the participation of PWDs in enforcement mechanisms as well as their access to affordable quality orthopedic devices and assistive technology to enable them to engage actively in employment.
- **Improved employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.** Models to increase PWDs' skills and improve job matching and brokerage will be developed to facilitate PWDs' access to regular jobs and self-employment. Monitoring employers' compliance with the PWD employment regulation will be strengthened. The activities will focus on making public employment practices more effective in creating individual pathways to employment (e.g., case management and job coaching) and supporting the development of a DPO employment resource center in Ulaanbaatar (infrastructure, equipment, training, and capacity building) that can provide services to PWDs, employers, and public employment offices and facilitating enforcement of employment quotas for PWDs.
- **Strategic development to support persons with disabilities.** The project aims to achieve a change in attitude toward PWDs with a better understanding of disability through the introduction of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF), and improved statistics and information on challenges faced by PWDs. Activities include

² The Sustainable Development Goals set out in the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030 (Government of Mongolia, State of Great Khural. 2016. *Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030*. Ulaanbaatar.).

raising awareness about PWDs, reforming the welfare system to improve financial support for PWDs to facilitate better access to services and equipment, a strategic review of the national PWD support program, introduction of the ICF in line with needs and available resources, aligning National Statistical Office data with information needs in relation to disability, and ensuring the provision of health insurance coverage to all PWDs.

The project will directly benefit PWDs by providing them with access to improved services, employment opportunities, and more support through social welfare reform. Some project components will focus on regions where more than 50% of PWDs live in poverty. It is expected that at least 10,000 PWDs will benefit from improved employment services and, by 2022, at least 5,000 more PWDs will enter the labor market than in 2014. Social welfare reforms will benefit 400,000 people living in households with at least one

PWD, providing them with more equitable and accessible social assistance programs. It is also estimated that 17,000 CWDs and 62,000 PWDs will benefit from early identification and improved services provided through the development of rehabilitation centers in the project target areas. More than 10 DPOs will be involved in public communications campaigns, employment and work support, and monitoring of all project implementation activities as part of the project steering committee. The project is estimated to be completed by 31 December 2022.

REFERENCE

ADB. 2017. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan and Administration of Grant to Mongolia for the Ensuring Inclusiveness and Service Delivery for Persons with Disabilities Project*. Manila.

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