



Global Communities in Mongolia

The **Enabling Market Integration through Rural Group Empowerment (EMIRGE)** program in Mongolia works with agricultural cooperatives to increase their capacity to produce higher-value products and services, establish links to the private sector, and leverage market-based solutions. EMIRGE empowers farmers to move from an agri-“culture” mindset one of agri-“business.” Past assistance initiatives included activities in Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya.

Issued through USAID’s Bureau of Education, Economic Growth and the Environment and implemented by Global Communities, the EMIRGE program has been active in Mongolia from 2009 to 2019. The program began working in the ‘ger’ areas in 2010 with only a few dairy producer groups who struggled to keep their cows healthy through the Mongolian winter. By mid-2019, EMIRGE Mongolia works with more than 1,000 cooperative members in multiple value chains and has directly benefited over 10,000 entrepreneurs, community members and local businesses in both the rural areas and in Ulaanbaatar.

- EMIRGE Mongolia worked with over 70 cooperatives and producer groups, including: 29 dairy, 38 vegetable, four bee keeper cooperatives/groups as well as six cooperatives/groups that produce both dairy products and vegetables
- Cooperative/group income increased by 158 times (sales of \$5,522,928 through program years)
- Newly acquired greenhouse technology enabled the

farmers to extend their production period by more than 100 days, allowing them to harvest twice a year

- Coop Farmer Markets’ sales income increased by 61%
- The total investment by the farmers reached \$552,049
- Milk production during winter months increased by 56% since 2010 as a result of improvements in dairy cattle feeding and AI (artificial insemination)
- Product development increased 92% through the years 2010-2019
- Market channels expanded by 27.3%
- Over 700 jobs were created in rural areas (16,120 person days)

Approach to Cooperative Capacity Building

EMIRGE builds the capacity of cooperatives in five key areas; Governance, Management, Production, Marketing and Cooperative Membership.

Using the EMIRGE-developed Cooperative Performance Index (CPI), cooperatives are assessed to understand the challenges and the opportunities that each group is facing in each of the five key dimensions. A capacity-building plan is developed and each cooperative sets targets for their business growth. As member owners, they are responsible for making progress towards their goals, contributing equitably, and expanding their markets.

As community-embedded social businesses, cooperatives also receive capacity building that focuses on member community strengthening initiatives such as nutrition information and cooking classes, saving groups, leadership and empowerment training, and community cohesion.

Strengthening Markets

To strengthen markets, EMIRGE works with the private sector to develop relationships with firms who have an incentive in seeing the Mongolian milk and vegetable sector grow. Working alongside cooperatives to build organizational and production capacities they simultaneously strengthen demand for Mongolian products.

Cooperatives Are Self-driven & Self-funded

Each cooperative and producer group creates and executes a business and financial plan under the mentorship of EMIRGE staff. Since 2010, members have invested over \$552,049 of their own funds into their farms and cooperatives.

Other Programs

The **Mongolian Agribusiness Support Program** was implemented between 2009 and 2012 with funding from USDA. The program focused on developing the Mongolian pork industry, pork value chain and vegetable farmers' market expansion.

The **IMPACTS** program was implemented between 2005 and 2009 to develop the capacity of GER Initiative groups and cooperatives, increase participation of cooperatives in reformation of cooperative legal framework in Mongolia and to strengthen cooperation among cooperatives and cooperative supporting organizations. The program closely worked with the SME and Cooperative Policy Coordination Department of MOFALI, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Justice, Cooperative Unions and the Mongolian National Cooperative Alliance.



The **Growing Entrepreneurship Rapidly (GER) Initiative** was funded by USAID and USDA, and was implemented by CHF International. The program successfully ran for seven years between August 2002 and March 2009 to assist the economic development and capacity in ger districts located in urban areas in Mongolia. The GER Initiative had program branches in Ulaanbaatar city, Darkhan-Uul, Orkhon, Dornod, Selenge, Bulgan, Tuv and Bayan-Ulgii provinces and worked with small businesses in ger districts to improve their productivity and profits, support new and existing businesses, strengthen their capacity, and create new jobs. The program also worked together with IMPACTS to support and encourage individuals to cooperate as a group or cooperative, assist unemployed people in finding work, provide training, market linkages and financial assistance.

In order to ensure sustainability following the project's end, in 2009, the GER Initiative's project team was successfully trained to establish and run an independent local non-governmental organization called **Development Solutions**.



Global Communities is an international non-profit organization that works closely with communities worldwide to bring about sustainable changes that improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable. Development is not something we do for people; it is something we do with them. We believe that the people who understand their needs best are the people of the community itself.

Please visit our website at www.globalcommunities.org for more information.