

Developing River Stewardship in Mongolia

Phase 2 - 2009



A Funding Proposal



Prepared by
McEwen & Associates

March, 2009

Executive Overview

This proposal represents Phase 2 (2009) of Developing River Stewardship in Mongolia.

The aims of developing river stewardship in Mongolia are to:

- ◆ support the endeavours of Mongolia's Master Plan for Development of Education to establish education for sustainable development;
- ◆ support the development of creative thinkers in Mongolia's youth for Mongolia's democratic society and its emerging economy;
- ◆ nurture the development of informed citizens to participate in River Management Councils, as provisioned in Mongolia's Law on Water;
- ◆ support the ongoing work of The Asia Foundation and Binder to develop a community river water quality monitoring plan and develop associated school curriculum; and
- ◆ support awareness of national and global water issues relative to competing demands of the limited supply and the influence of climate change.

In Phase 1 (2008), the project entailed the purchase and gift of a 14' river raft with accompanying gear to Binder School, and training to 14 youth and teachers from the school on river raft paddling, safety and rescue, and river ecology of the Onon River.

Phase 2 (2009) of the project entails instruction to Binder youth and teachers in river raft rowing, leadership skills, and continued awareness development of the ecology and water quality of the Onon River.

To enable Phase 2 (2009) of the program, the proposal seeks funding for 22,000 CAD. This is to complement in-kind contributions of 23,500 CAD and existing donations of 1,500 CAD for rowing equipment, for a total estimated project cost of 47,000 CAD.

Table of Contents

The Issue	1
Proposal	3
Training Team.....	4
Catherine McEwen – Project Manager, Environmental Educator.....	4
Maureen Garrity – Leadership Trainer	4
Hector MacKenzie – Rafting Trainer.....	4



The Issue

- ◆ Mongolia's water resources are a limited supply impacted by growing demands from agriculture, mining, residential and commercial activities, and by the effects of climate change, and changing soil quality and vegetation cover.

The first national report on the status of Mongolia's water, *The Water Resources, Use and Conservation in Mongolia* (2008)¹ clearly states the need to be vigilant with the use of its water resources, to protect them and ensure that ecological balance is effectively maintained. It notes that as an influence of climate change, Mongolia has been experiencing low levels of precipitation and high levels of evaporation. The report also states that drinking water quality often does not meet either national or international standards.

- ◆ Water is a public resource in Mongolia, and the nation's citizens have certain rights and duties to ensure its protection, quality and supply as enshrined in the country's constitution and relevant laws.

Mongolia's Law for Water enables river management councils to be established as a structure to deal with water management issues.

- ◆ Local stewardship is an effective means for conservation of regional water resources. It demands informed citizens and ideally citizens who understand multi-stakeholder perspectives, and the bigger picture of ecological needs and user needs.

Understanding the needs of the economy, environment and society as an interconnected whole, and the multiple stakeholders perspectives this entails is fundamental to Education for Sustainable Development, an initiative of the United Nations Education Programme that Mongolia's Ministry of Education and Culture has endorsed and is instituting within its school curricula. Developing youth leadership, consensus building, and critical thinking skills are an important thread to the fabric of Education for Sustainable Development.

- ◆ Learning through immersion, with direct personal experiences, supports the greatest impact in education.

Immersion within a stimulating environment creates opportunity for the learner to experience new learning first hand through action and engagement. This ultimately deepens the learning experience, supporting personal behavioral change. An immersion experience, as provided by a program of river navigation skills on a raft coupled with hands-on learning activities creates the opportunity for learners to make greater connections to their individual knowledge constructs.

- ◆ The Onon River flows through north eastern Mongolia with its headwaters in the Khenti Mountains and its river mouth in the Pacific Ocean.

¹ N. Batsukh, D. Dorjsuren, and G. Batsaikhan. 2008. *The Water Resources, Use and Conservation in Mongolia* (First national report). Ulaanbaatar.

The Onon River is one of Mongolia's clean and abundantly flowing rivers. Flowing out from the Khenti Mountains, the Onon relies on precipitation for its flow. It is the perfect outdoor classroom to engage youth and teachers in aspects of river ecology and water quality, supporting learning towards river stewardship and the stewardship of Mongolia's water resources in general.

- ◆ Binder School focuses on the Onon River within their school curricula.

Binder School is among the 62 schools across Mongolia to have received teacher training in The Asia Foundation's Water Quality Monitoring project. The school has established a water quality monitoring site on the Onon River and is part of a regional water quality monitoring plan with other communities along the river. Prior to this, the river, by nature of its prominent importance to the community, was the subject of many classroom studies.

- ◆ Not all teachers are equal and some go the extra distance for their students.

At Binder School, having made the acquaintance of teacher Urjin, it was clear that he is among those teachers who provide enriched learning opportunities for their students. His teaching prowess made for a natural fit with the river rafting and ecology training at Binder School in Phase 1 (2008) of the project. Binder School now possesses the river raft and gear and has trained students and teachers. The school and trainees from 2008 are an obvious place to further the training in 2009 for Phase 2, prior to initiating Phase 3, with youth and teachers in other communities.



Proposal

This funding proposal seeks to increase the impact and sustainability of Phase 1 (2008) to support stewardship of the Onon River. Phase 2 (2009) entails the return of the training team to Binder to create an expanded immersion program on the Onon River.

Phase 2 (2009) has three elements:

1. training in leadership, team building and consensus building through experiential learning;
2. training in river ecology through field observations and measurements; and
3. training in raft rowing (including safety, swimming and river navigation).

To affect the greatest impact of the training, trainees from Phase 1 (2008) will constitute the trainees for Phase 2 (2009) with one or two more teachers added to the trainee team. This will provide greater sustainability to the training and further its impact. Trainees effectively become trainers to others.

Training will take place in summer 2009 over a two week period, either before or after Nadaam, and prior to the August harvest season.

Deliverables of Phase 2:

Students

- ◆ skills in team building
- ◆ skills in consensus building
- ◆ skills in personal leadership

Teachers

- ◆ observe, participate and evaluate same
- ◆ observe, participate and evaluate same
- ◆ observe, participate and evaluate same
- ◆ activities for teaching ESD

Both Students and Teachers

- ◆ greater understandings of Onon R. ecology
- ◆ skills in river quality evaluation
- ◆ skills in raft rowing
- ◆ develop tomorrow's candidates for river management councils

Partnership:

The Project will complement and further the efforts of water quality monitoring and training initiated by The Asia Foundation (Mongolia office). The Project will continue to work with Binder School.

Phase 3 (2010):

- ◆ Youth exchange/interchange among different communities
- ◆ Development of booklet of activities for river stewardship, as practiced in 2009 and evaluated by participating students and teachers. Booklet to include: leadership activities, and river ecology activities.

Training Team

The 2009 training team is comprised of three seasoned professionals serving the project as volunteers in their professional capacities. Each one values river and local community empowerment as honourable objectives of their life's work. They operated Phase 1 (2008).

Catherine McEwen – Project Manager, Environmental Educator

Catherine McEwen has over 25 years experience in field studies and environmental education. She is the past national coordinator for the GLOBE program in Canada, an international field science program. She recently evaluated the water quality monitoring education program for The Asia Foundation (Mongolia office) and coordinates school field programs in her home province. She holds a B.Sc. and an M.A. in resource and management sustainability. Catherine first traveled to Mongolia in 2007 to work as a volunteer with the Asia Foundation. This will be her fourth season in Mongolia.

Maureen Garrity – Leadership Trainer

Maureen Garrity has spent more than 25 years working with youth and adults in group settings, teaching outdoor skills, leadership and communication. Her over 20 years experience as an adventure guide rafting and canoeing the rivers of northern Canada and Alaska. have contributed to Maureen's group and leadership expertise. She currently works as an alternative dispute resolution and communication trainer and coach in private practice, as well for the Justice Institute of British Columbia. Maureen's experience working with First Nations' youth and her present coaching background provide her with the skills for training effectively in a different culture. Her easy connection with people quickly removes cultural barriers. This will be Maureen's second season in Mongolia.

Hector MacKenzie – Rafting Trainer

Hector is a veteran wilderness guide and instructor with over 30 years experience operating and training on rivers in northern Canada and Alaska. He operates Yukon Mountain and River expeditions, an ecotourism adventure company he has owned for more than 30 years. Hector holds certification as a *National Parks River Guide*, a *Rafting Instructor National Parks Wardens*, and an *Instructor Whitewater Rescue for rafting and canoeing*. Hector's ease in a wild landscape makes him a valuable consultant for wilderness filmmakers. He brings to the team an infectious sense of humour and a deep respect for all life. This will be Hector's second season in Mongolia.