



BLUE SKIES ARTS & MUSIC PROGRAMME MONGOLIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



APPENDIX

OUR VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
PROGRAMME OVERVIEW	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
PROGRAMME BACKGROUND	8
OUR YEAR	9
392 Beneficiaries in 2018	9
Message from Lucy Morris, Arts & Music Programme Manager	10
PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES	12
Art	12
Blue Skies Ger Village Art Therapy	14
Boys' Prison Art	15
OUR VOICE	16
Child Sponsorship Programme Art	18
Crafts	19
Music	20
TESTIMONIAL	22
Dance	23
Other Activities and Highlights	24
OUR STORIES	29
Art heals	29
Art Transforms	31
Art Saves	33
A Mother's Message	34
From the Children's Perspective	34
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	35



ABBREVIATIONS

CNCF	Christina Noble Children's Foundation
CSP	Child Sponsorship Programme



REPORT 2018

OUR VISION, MISSION, VALUES

Vision: A united world where children are free from suffering, poverty, exploitation, fear, and oppression. Where children are aware of their fundamental human rights.

Mission: The Christina Noble Children's Foundation is dedicated to serving the physical, medical, educational and emotional needs of vulnerable children. We believe that every child deserves love, respect and freedom from all forms of exploitation.

Values: Our values represent our beliefs and guide how we behave. They are: Love, Compassion, Respect, Honesty, and Integrity.



REPORT 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude for the very generous support of **The Sovereign Art Foundation Hong Kong**, who since 2011, have been our annual primary sponsors of the Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme. We cannot express enough just how much of an impact this on-going generous support has meant and which has been instrumental in CNCF fulfilling our founder Christina Noble's mission of giving children in our care an emotionally rich and happy childhood. By introducing our young people to creative experiences, they learn the power of self-expression and self-exploration, which helps them build a strong platform upon which they can build well-rounded lives where then can grow and flourish. CNCF is about our children thriving, not just surviving, and the prolific support and belief in our work we have received from **The Sovereign Art Foundation Hong Kong** has allowed us to deliver the commitment and promise we make to our children, that every child deserves a happy childhood.

We also thank the following groups and individuals for their valued and heartfelt contributions to our children's artistic development during 2018.

Aim4R Dance Studio and Aimar Foundation for their enthusiastic cooperation and desire to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds learn dance.

ArtiCour Gallery for sharing their time, space, and artistic knowledge with our children.

And our amazing volunteers and visitors who have encouraged and developed our children's creativity through various art, crafts, dance, and music activities.

REPORT 2018

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW



ESTABLISHED	2008
LOCATION	Blue Skies Ger Village, Songino Khairkhan District, Ulaanbaatar The 411th Brigade Boys' Prison CNCF Office, Gerel Center, Ulaanbaatar 15160, Mongolia
OBJECTIVES	To use the transformative power of the arts to help disadvantaged children build self-esteem, confidence, and social skills by allowing them to explore their imaginations and creativity in a safe, supportive, and loving environment
PROGRAMME COMPONENTS	Classes in visual arts, music, dance, and crafts; art therapy
BENEFICIARIES	Children from the Blue Skies Ger Village, Child Sponsorship Programme, and Boys' Prison
LOCAL PARTNERS	Aim4r Dance Studio and Aimar Foundation (Dance), ArtiCour Gallery (Art)
CNCF INVOLVEMENT	Fully responsible for funding and programme management, monitoring, and evaluation



CNCF STAFF

Thomas Minter, Director of Operations; Lucy Morris, Programme Manager; Gonchig Lkhagva, Music Teacher; Oyunsuren Naran, Traditional Music Teacher; Uugankhuu Griishaa, Ger Village Art Teacher; Altansukh Purevdorj, Boys' Prison Art Teacher; Dalaitseren Bat-ireedui, Sponsorship Programme Art Teacher; Micheelt Munkhtogtokh, Crafts Teacher; Nomin-Erdene, Psychotherapist / Art Therapist.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Because CNCF is directly responsible for funding and programme management, monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out regularly. The Programme Manager conducts monitoring visits during programme activities. Weekly internal meetings are organised for CNCF staff to discuss programme-related issues and updates and an annual report are sent to all stakeholders. Most importantly, the progress the children are making is on display at various events such as talent shows and celebrations that are held at least once per quarter.

2018 ACTUAL COSTS

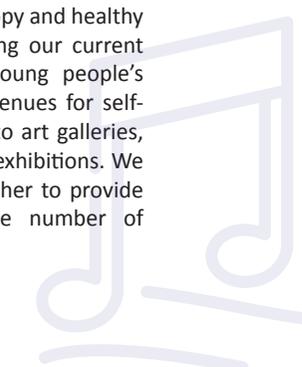
USD \$23,889.69

FUTURE PLANS

In 2019, we will continue to provide creative activities that currently support our children's happy and healthy development. In addition to maintaining our current curriculum, we plan to enrich our young people's creative experience by seeking new avenues for self-expression and learning, such as trips to art galleries, performing in concerts, and putting on exhibitions. We also plan to hire a full-time dance teacher to provide greater consistency and increase the number of children who can participate in dance.

REPORTING PERIOD

January – December 2018



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, the Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme continued to provide disadvantaged children the opportunity to participate in art and music activities that allow them to explore their creativity and build self-esteem, confidence, and social skills. Since its inception, the Arts & Music Programme has helped fulfil our founder's mission of giving children in our care an emotionally rich and happy childhood.

The Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme operates across three of our Foundation's projects:

- The Blue Skies Ger Village
- Child Sponsorship Programme
- Boys' Prison Education Programme

DURING 2018

The programme included lessons in visual arts, crafts, dance, and music and benefitted

225
CHILDREN
from the Child Sponsorship Programme

106
TEENAGERS
in the boys' prison.

61
CHILDREN
from the Blue Skies Ger Village



OVER
1.700
CHILDREN

has been assisted by the Arts & Music Programme in Mongolia

IN 2019

We will continue to provide creative activities that support our children's happy and healthy development. In addition to maintaining our current curriculum, we plan to enrich our young people's creative experience by seeking new avenues for self-expression and learning, such as trips to art galleries, performing in concerts, and putting on exhibitions. We also plan to hire a full-time dance teacher to provide greater consistency and open the programme to more children.



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Once you feed a child's stomach you must feed their spirit. Arts & Music activate the spirit and promote healing, and all of our children come to us in desperate need of healing. Let the children laugh sing, dance and play for Childhood is the very foundation of life.

- Christina Noble OBE -





REPORT 2018

PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

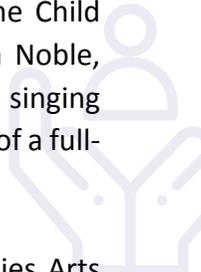
CNCF began operations in Mongolia in 1997. In 2007, to mark the foundation's tenth anniversary in Mongolia, a celebration was held at the Blue Skies Ger Village in Ulaanbaatar. The highlight of the celebration was a concert staged by the children from the village and the Child Sponsorship Programme. Christina Noble's daughter, Helenita Noble, who is now CEO of the Foundation, was so impressed with the singing and dancing talents of the children that she proposed initiation of a full-time music and dance programme.

Since then, the programme expanded to become the Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme, which has played a central role in helping CNCF realise our founder's vision of giving some of the country's most neglected and deprived children back their childhoods.

For many of our young people, who have come to us from exceptionally disadvantaged and traumatic backgrounds, art can facilitate healing and give them a tool to communicate their emotions in a healthy and positive way. We believe encouraging our children to explore their imaginations and express themselves creatively in a safe and supportive environment is fundamental to their happy and healthy development.

Poverty in childhood is often the platform for a lifetime of difficulties. Children raised in poverty face overwhelming challenges that most young people never have to confront. They experience significantly more stress resulting from loneliness, family aggression, neglect, and dysfunctional peer relationships. In many cases, this inhibits healthy brain function and development which often leads to significant challenges later in life. Exposure to an arts education can play a crucial role in addressing some of these imbalances, helping support the social, intellectual, cognitive, and emotional growth of all children.

Our Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme offers classes suitable for children who are new to art and music and want to learn the basics, as well as those who have a talent they wish to nurture. From making felt crafts to lessons in street dance, our programme provides a diverse range of creative activities to accommodate our children's unique characters and interests.



OUR YEAR



The Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme operates across three CNCF projects: The Blue Skies Ger Village, Child Sponsorship Programme, and Boys' Prison Education Programme.

IN 2018

Our children took part in art, crafts, dance, and music lessons

MORE THAN

225 CHILDREN

 from the Child Sponsorship Programme

61 CHILDREN

living at the Blue Skies Ger Village

106 TEENAGERS

in the boys' prison participated in the programme



We also provided art therapy sessions for all Ger Village children.

In addition to scheduled classes, the children participated in an exciting and enriching range of events, field trips, performances, and exhibitions.



392 Beneficiaries in 2018

Ger Village Participation (61 children)



Child Sponsorship Programme (225 children)



Boys' Prison (106 children)



REPORT 2018

Message from Lucy Morris, Arts & Music Programme Manager

This year, the Arts & Music Programme has continued to grow and expand, bringing the transformative power of the arts to more disadvantaged children than ever before. In 2018, we increased the number of art classes available to children in our Child Sponsorship Programme from one class per month to two per week, we added dance classes, and extended our music programme to include teenagers in the Boys' Prison. By furthering the scope of our programme, we have been touched by more and more stories of children who have developed a newfound passion for the arts and who have been able to find happiness and hope in what is often a hard and colourless existence.

I am truly proud to be part of this amazing programme, which allows some of Mongolia's most vulnerable young people the opportunity to express themselves and their unique characters, imaginations, and experiences in a creative, inspiring, and supportive environment.

In many ways, the Arts & Music Programme is the soul of our Foundation's work with the children and what allows us to fulfil Christina's philosophy:

“

First you feed a child's stomach, then you feed their spirit.





PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

Art

Our art lessons provided students with dedicated time for creativity and imagination. These classes are often the highlight of our students' schedules.

During the classes, students explore different mediums including clay, pastels, paints, and pencil while expressing their unique imaginations and creative ideas.

We also work to inspire interest in different artists, styles, and genres. We do this by exposing them to art in galleries, books, and online, and encouraging our children to reflect upon and discuss how these pieces make them think and feel.

Blue Skies Ger Village Art

Art lessons take place every Sunday in our Ger Village classroom. The three-hour sessions are taught by professional artist Uugankhuu and are open to all of our young people.

The students are divided into two groups by skill level. In the beginner's class, the students learn basic drawing techniques and participate in fun, creative activities such as making posters about Ger Village life and painting brightly coloured stones. The younger children love this dedicated time for imagination, and the class is always busy with around fifteen students attending at a time.

In the advanced class, students learn a variety of artistic techniques, such as painting with oils, sculpture, and working with clay. Throughout the year, a core group of ten students has been established — these children have shown a keen interest in art and attend their lessons with great enthusiasm and commitment to the subject. They have produced an array of captivating work, and it is clear to see their continuous development as artists both in confidence and skill.



Message from CNCF Ger Village Art Teacher

I encourage the children to draw inspiration from their life experiences and try to convey their emotions using colour, texture, and form. I am always amazed by how easily this concept comes to them and the fascinating works of art they produce when expressing their inner worlds.

In addition to classes, we also go on field trips to galleries and exhibitions. By changing their environment and looking at other works of art, the children's minds are opened, and they gain new ideas and inspiration for their future creations.

I can see that through the art class the children are not only improving their artistic skills, but they are also changing as people. For example, one girl would often skip my class and when she did come was always very closed and didn't like to show her emotions to others. With continued reinforcement, she started to attend my lessons regularly, where under my guidance she learned how to communicate her inner world through art. Over time she became more relaxed and began to gain confidence in talking about her work and its meaning to the class. I am proud to say that she is now a very different child, who has

found an avenue of expression and inner peace through art.

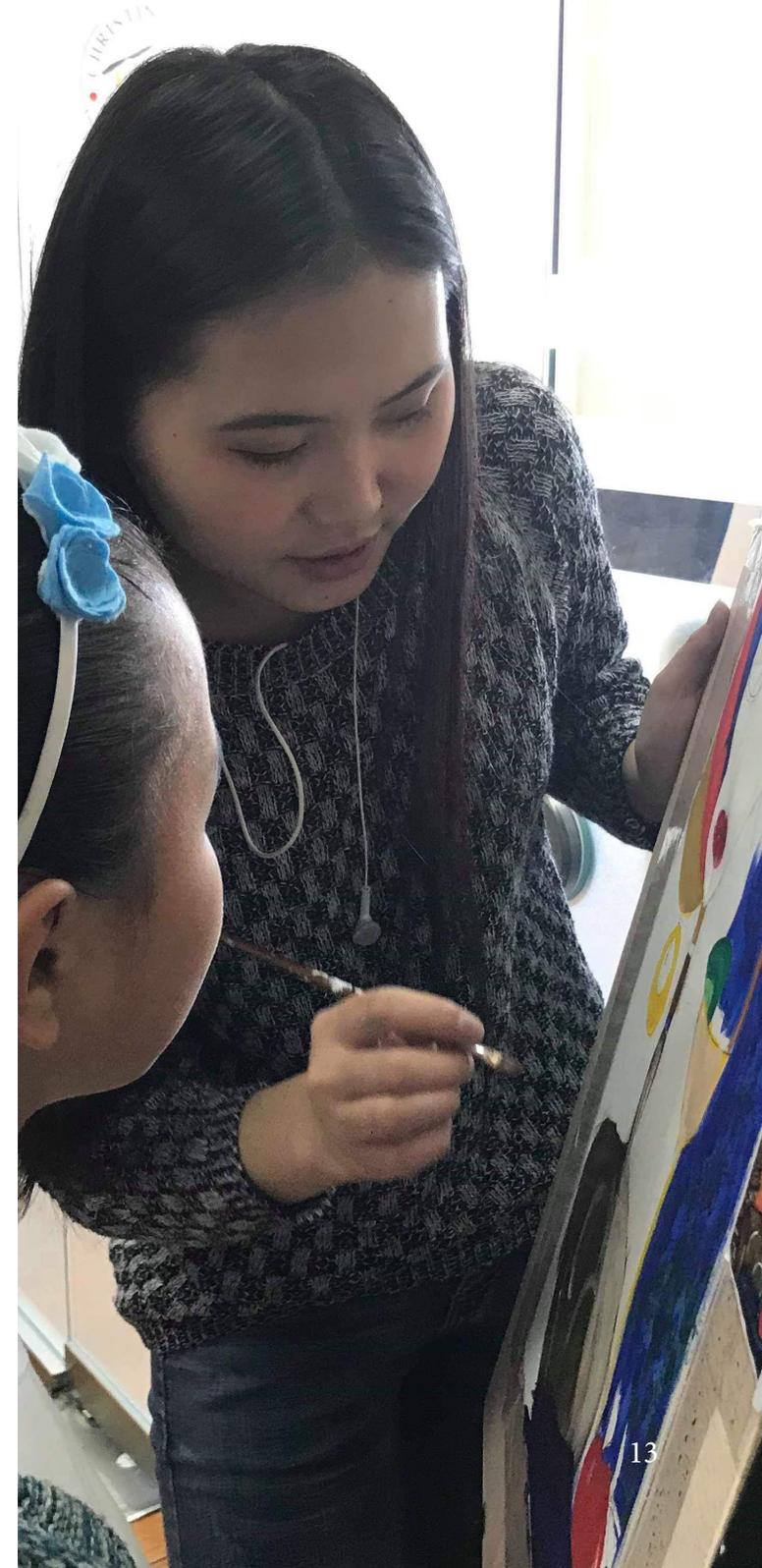
Art is compelling for the children at the Ger Village. They can express their deepest feelings and release trapped trauma and painful memories from their childhoods. The staff at the village have said to me they feel a different energy from those who attend my lessons. They are more open, calm and able to communicate in a thoughtful and less reactive way.

One child said to me:



I feel happy and peaceful when I paint, it's like the whole world slows down and I am in my own beautiful place where everything is possible.

I am very proud to be part of CNCF's Arts & Music Programme, and to be able to play a role in opening these special children up to the transformative potential of art.



Blue Skies Ger Village Art Therapy



Our primary goal at the Blue Skies Ger Village is to heal the emotional trauma of the children who live there. Our full-time psychotherapist plays a crucial role in this process and since beginning with us in April 2015, she has helped many children regain trust in a world that has previously caused them significant pain and sadness. It is often through the techniques of art therapy that she has been able to connect with these children's internal realities and help them break negative thought patterns and behaviours that otherwise could stay with them into adulthood.

The psychotherapist meets with every child in the village at least once a month. She arranges art therapy sessions for children most in need up to five times a week. All children also participate in group work where they are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings and talk about how they can be more supportive of themselves, each other, and their community. Like during the individual sessions, art, crafts, and other creative activities are utilised extensively.

Through talking to our children about their drawings, paintings, and crafts, and considering the underlying inspiration for their art, our psychotherapist gains a deeper understanding of our young people and works with them closely to resolve any emotional challenges.

This year, 61 children living in the Ger Village on either a permanent or temporary basis participated in art therapy. Our psychotherapist has observed continuous and marked improvements in the children's attitudes, behavior, and overall outlook on life. Through the creative process, our children have been able to explore their feelings, resolve emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, manage their behaviour, develop social skills, reduce anxiety, and increase self-esteem.





The boys love working with colour. When they are going through such a dark time in their lives and have had their freedom taken away, I think that colour brings them happiness and light in the greyness of prison. It allows them to express their individuality and the emotions that they are holding inside.

- CNCF Art Teacher -

Boys' Prison Art

Each week, professional artist Altansukh Purevdorj teaches two three-hour art lessons at the Boys' Prison. The classes aim to build the boys' confidence and ability to express themselves. For the boys, many of whom have come to the prison from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds, art is an entirely new experience, and so it is essential to start with simple drawing techniques and concepts to help them feel comfortable.

The art lessons have produced significant improvements in the teenagers' attitudes and behaviour. As they open up creatively and learn to express their thoughts and feelings through art, the boys' become calmer, more patient, and develop a greater sense of self-belief and pride. This year, 102 teenagers participated the prison art class.

OUR VOICE

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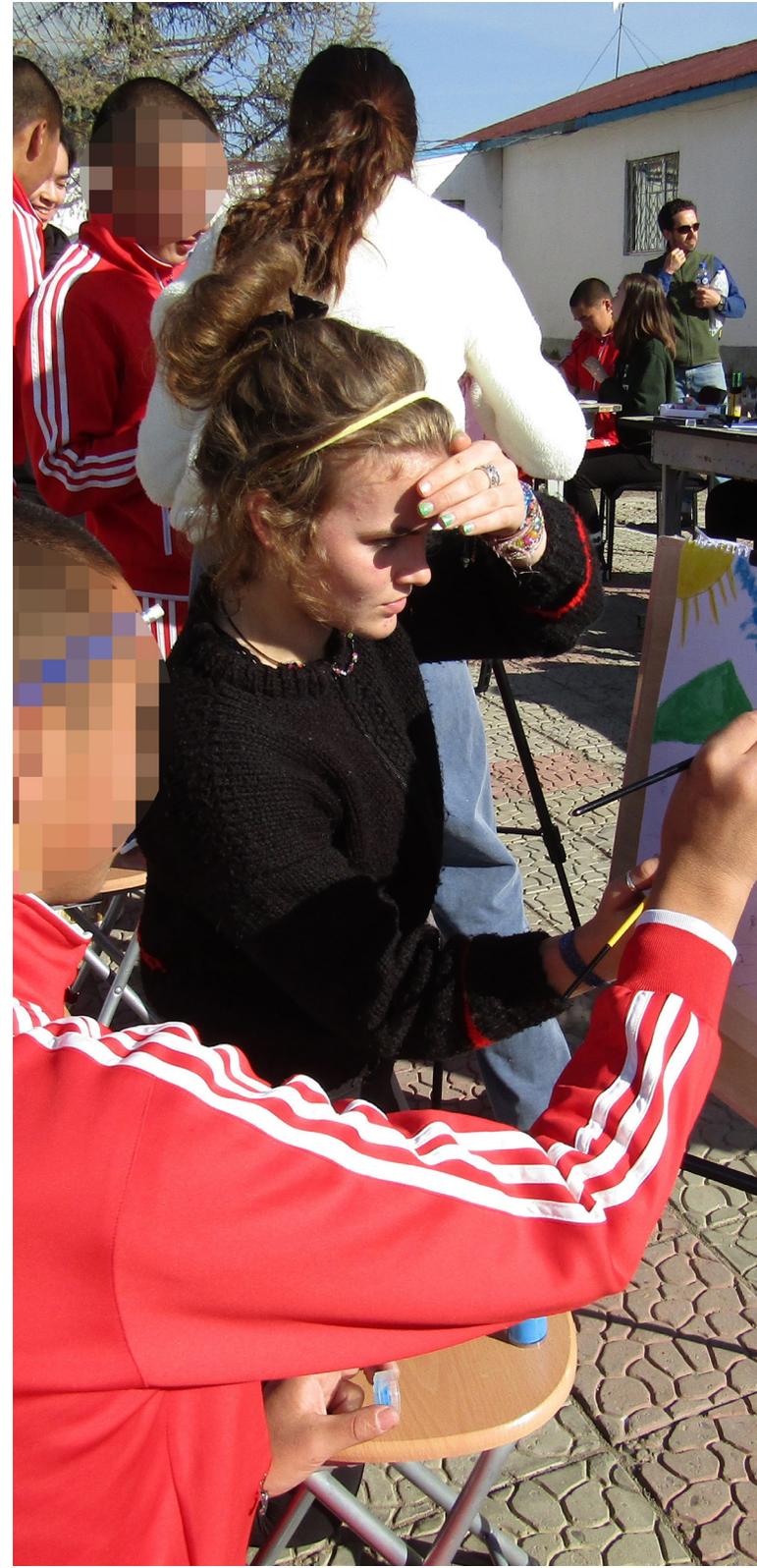
Most of the boys at the prison are traumatised and emotionally unstable because of their background and current circumstances. Not having access to the outside world has a significant impact on these children. Many of them are here because of their adverse home conditions and being in prison adds even more trauma to their lives. Many of them come to class the first time without any confidence, and they are frozen emotionally. As an art teacher, I have seen incredible changes in the boys' minds and can see that through art their emotions are becoming more stable and they can see a brighter future. Art helps the teenagers control their feelings and gives them an opportunity to communicate with their inner souls as well as others around them.

– CNCF Boys' Prison Art Teacher –

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I love going to art class because I can express my thoughts and feelings through art and discuss them with my teacher who is very open and understanding. I think all artists are spiritually free and don't judge others. When I am creating art, my mind feels clear from distractions—sometimes I feel like I am flying! One of the most beautiful things about art is that it helps me calm down and makes me forget about my past and my problems. Having a hobby is the best thing in life. My hobby is drawing, and I love presenting my work to people and seeing their reactions—watching them try to read my work is the best. I love art and want to continue doing it forever.

– 18-year-old Boys' Prison Art Student –





Child Sponsorship Programme Art



Our Child Sponsorship Programme provides support for children and their families who live in extreme poverty and hardship. Our programme is a lifeline for many families, offering them the financial means to eat and keep warm and for the children to go to school. In addition to financial help, our social work team works closely with every family, supporting them emotionally and offering opportunities such as workshops and seminars to encourage their personal development.

CNCF's art classes are part of this additional and valuable support, providing children who have no access to art materials the opportunity to develop their skills and express themselves creatively.

In 2019, 130 children benefited from our art classes, which took place every Sunday in our main office. The sessions are taught by talented artist Dalaitseren Bat-Ireedui who grew up at CNCF's Blue Skies Ger Village and is now on our Child Sponsorship Programme while studying at university.

To help our young artists reach their full potential, we offer two classes based on their skill level: one in the morning for beginners and one in the afternoon for more advanced students.

We believe that by exposing our children to new ideas, experiences, and people, we help them discover new interests and capabilities and see beyond their often limiting and challenging circumstances.



Crafts

Craft classes have been part of our Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme since 2016. The fun and imaginative sessions take place in our central office and have an average attendance of 12 children. During the lessons, our children learn a wide range of craft techniques such as sewing, stuffing, beading, and following patterns.

Our children love attending the weekly classes and have produced beautiful and well-designed crafts such as decorative gers (traditional Mongolian felt tents), cushions, camels, frames, and felt bags.

One of our children's favourite activities this year was making Christmas decorations, which they proudly took back to their families to decorate their homes.

In addition to the craft classes, this year, a group of our most skilled students established a small enterprise making felt laptop cases, which they plan to sell next year.

Furthermore, in partnership with Asral NGO, we were able to expand our craft activities by funding materials at the Boys' Prison. From January to May, the students honed their creative skills during weekly 2.5-hour long craft classes. The boys had lots of fun learning how to make a range of felt items such as slippers, animal ornaments, and phone cases. We hope to continue craft classes at the prison in 2019, with the objective of starting a self-funding business.

Craft classes help our children become more patient, focused, and better at listening and following instructions. The classes are also full of fun, friendship, and have no doubt created many happy childhood memories that our young people will carry with them for the rest of their lives.



Music

Music has the unique ability to connect with and heal the soul. It fuels and inspires the mind, stirs emotions, relieves anxieties, and creates memories. Christina Noble recognises the magical and reviving capabilities of music; she recalls many lonely and desperate times during her childhood when music and singing were her only forms of escape and connection to a world beyond her horrific daily reality.

At the Blue Skies Ger Village, our professional music teacher works three days a week helping our children learn a variety of instruments including the guitar, ukulele, and piano. He also leads choir practice once a week with 20 of our most eager singers.

Saturday is known as our music fun day at the village and is a time for our children to gather and take part in musically inspired games and competitions and watch inspirational movies. The children enjoy this relaxed and fun time, which is often a welcome break from their busy schedules.

This year, 15 children attended piano lessons, 6 children attended guitar lessons, and 8 children attended ukulele lessons.

Classes are open to all our young people, and at specific points throughout the year, all children participate in the music programme. However, these children have shown dedication to becoming accomplished musicians and commit to attending lessons regularly.

In addition to learning contemporary music, 12 of our children attended lessons from January-June in traditional Mongolian instruments, such as the Yatag, which is the Mongolian half-tube zither, and the Shanz, a plucked three-string instrument that is commonly played across Asia.

By incorporating these traditional instruments into the music programme, we help maintain and support our young people's cultural identity and heritage, which is a fundamental goal of CNCF.

In March, we were happy to extend our musical activities to the students in the boys' prison who can now attend ukulele, guitar, and singing lessons two afternoons a week. So far, these classes have benefited 46 teenagers at the boys' prison.





TESTIMONIAL



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In March, I started working as a music teacher in the boys' prison. I feel very grateful to have the opportunity to work with the students and share with them my talent. I know that many of the boys have come from challenging circumstances and I believe strongly that through music they can learn to express their emotions, feel joy, and build self-esteem. It is seeing the students' progress, and love for music come alive, that brings me the highest sense of satisfaction and reward for my work.

Music is a powerful therapeutic tool. It promotes emotional health, relieves stress, and improves psychological well-being. Since beginning my work here, I have seen many changes in the boys. I am encouraged by their dedication and evident passion for the subject—when they play music or sing a song, it always comes from the heart.

– **Music Teacher,**
Gonchig, about his work in the Boys' Prison—

“

I have always loved music because when I listen to it, I go to a different place. Learning how to play the guitar has been the best thing that has ever happened in my life. Before I came to prison, performing or talking in front of others was something that I could never do. But my teacher has taught me how to play the guitar and made me believe in myself. After performing a few times in front of my friends, my confidence started to grow as I could see that they were enjoying listening to me play. Now, I love performing in front of others. It is actually a really amazing feeling.

– **Music Student –**



Dance

CNCF believes in the power of dance and its wide-reaching effects on children. Dance is a way for our children to explore and communicate their emotions, build self-confidence, and develop their social skills. It is also highly physical and provides a fun and effective way for our children to improve their overall health and fitness.

This year, 15 of our older Ger Village children attended weekly street dance classes at Aim4r Dance studio, a professional street dance facility located in the centre of Ulaanbaatar.

From June to November, lessons at the studio were also available to children in our Child Sponsorship Programme. The students were divided into two groups based on age, and each group participated in one two-hour class per week. The lessons were a valuable opportunity for our children to make friends, keep fit, and enjoy an uplifting environment away from the stresses of everyday life. 38 children from our sponsorship programme benefited from the classes, all of whom are keen to continue learning this art form in 2019.

In addition to the classes held at the studio in the city, each week, a dance teacher from Aim4r Dance studio comes to the village to teach twelve of our younger children. The children love the sessions and have learned impressive street dance moves and routines.

Furthermore, all our children living at the Ger Village have the opportunity to cultivate their talents in traditional Mongolian dance. Our Ger Village psychotherapist, who was a skilled dancer herself, has worked with our young people to help them learn this unique art form.

In 2019, we plan to hire a full-time dance teacher to work across all three programmes—the Blue Skies Ger Village, Child Sponsorship Programme, and Boys' Prison. This will allow us to bring the joy of dance to even more children and on a more regular basis.



Other Activities and Highlights

Volunteer visit - Julie Donohue - Australia

Julie Donohue visited our Ger Village for two weeks. During her time with us, she conducted English lessons with the children and organised the Village's first ever play in English—Snow White. The children had lots of creative fun learning their lines, rehearsing for the play, and making their costumes. Thank you Julie for taking the time to bring such imaginative and educational fun to our children's home and creating lots of happy memories.

Youth Carnival

Eight children from our Child Sponsorship Programme and seven children from our Ger Village who had been taking part in dance classes represented CNCF at the Youth Carnival organised by the Family, Child, and Youth Development Agency. During the event, our talented young dancers surprised the crowd with a flash mob performance. The day showcased the important work of our Foundation in helping the country's most disadvantaged children achieve their full potential and become inspired, active members of Mongolian society.

Children's Rights Drawing Competition

Twenty-three of our art students, including eleven teenagers from the boys' prison, took part in a drawing competition aimed at raising awareness of children's rights and domestic abuse. Around 100 young people from across the country participated in the event, which was organised by Our Hearts for The Children Movement. Our talented young artists all submitted compelling pieces, which highlighted essential issues — many of which have personally touched their lives — in an imaginative and thought-provoking way.

We are delighted that three of our children came in first, second, and third place, each winning a certificate and a bike, but most importantly feeling proud of their achievement in bringing attention to this important cause.



United Nations World Food Day 2018 Poster Competition

This year, seven of our art students participated in the World Food Day 2018 Poster Competition.

Children and teens from all over the world entered the competition, which asked applicants to use their imagination to create a poster that illustrated their idea of Zero Hunger. The competition was an important opportunity for our children to discuss their thoughts surrounding this global issue and convey their voice through art.

Face Painting

In May, our art students organised a two-day face painting event, which took place at our sponsorship distribution weekend. The primary purpose was to bring joy and happiness to the children in our programme. It was also the art students first experience with face painting and an opportunity for them to develop their skills and confidence. The event brought smiles and happiness to over 350 children, who left the distribution transformed into cartoon characters, superheroes, and animals.

Following this success, our art students organised a second face painting event to celebrate International Children's Day. With the support of our art teacher and social workers, our students set up a stand at Chinggis Square, located in the centre of Ulaanbaatar. Over 150 children benefited from the event, which not only spread love and joy on Children's Day, but also promoted the Foundation's important work in Mongolia.

Summer Camp

In June, our CNCF art teacher, social worker, and members of our CNCF community service group, Noble Club, visited our sponsorship children during their stay at summer camp. The day was spent outside in the sunshine, having fun with friends, and drawing the beautiful natural surroundings. Days like this help lift our children's spirits and play an important role in cultivating their imaginations and artistic skills.



Sponsored Children's Art Exhibitions

This year, two of our children who attend the sponsorship programme art classes exhibited their work at school exhibitions. We were all so proud to see their captivating pieces displayed on the walls of their school and hear them talk about their work to their teachers and peers with such confidence, pride and meaning. During the event, it was clear to see how much art had helped them to express their emotions in a positive and therapeutic way and provided an avenue of healing which will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

Boys' Prison Art Exhibition

In May, an exhibition was arranged at the boys' prison to showcase the students' achievements. Family, friends, CNCF team members, government officials, and local organisations attended the event, which was both a celebration of the boys' artistic accomplishments and a valuable opportunity to promote the excellent service the prison is providing to these disadvantaged young men. We were all incredibly proud of the boys' artwork, which ranged from realistic black and white pencil drawings to bright abstract paintings. It was incredibly powerful to see the students' artistic expressions of their inner worlds, many of whom have grown up in extremely disadvantaged backgrounds never having experienced any creative stimulation or exposure to the arts.

Card Making with Volunteer Joss Stewart From Australia

Foundation supporter Joss Stewart visited Mongolia in August and spent a day at the village creating beautiful cards with 26 of our children. The children had lots of creative fun making their cards with special craft materials Joss brought from Australia. Thank you, Joss, for taking the time to help develop our children's imaginations and artistic skills.

Designing Christmas Cards

Children from the Ger Village, Child Sponsorship Programme, and Boys' Prison had imaginative and festive fun designing special Christmas images for our 2018 CNCF Christmas cards. Everyone was very excited to get involved and created their pieces with great focus and attention to detail. The finished artwork was beautiful and combined the essence of a western Christmas with aspects of Mongolian culture. The designs were printed onto cards to send to our Foundation's local partners, supporters, and partner government agencies. Furthermore, this year our children at the Ger Village set up a small enterprise selling their Christmas cards to local businesses to send to out to their customers. Not only did this help promote CNCF's outstanding work in Mongolia, but it also generated a small profit for the children, helping them learn about the basic principles of business.

Children's Day Celebration

To mark this year's Children's Day, our talented young people put on a special concert featuring a variety of dance and musical acts. As always, it was a joy to see our children take to the stage with such confidence and talent to showcase what they had learned in their extracurricular activities. The performances left our team filled with pride about the beautiful young people in our care.

Cultural Trips

We always seek new opportunities to inspire our children and expose them to new, stimulating environments and different forms of artistic expression. This year, our young people from the Ger Village went on several cultural trips including attending Mongolia's first ever children's opera. This was a very exciting experience for our children, who came home full of stories and inspiration. They also visited five galleries and museums to learn about different artists, styles, and genres. The children enjoyed looking at the art and discussing with their teacher how the work made them think and feel. The children left full of creative ideas about what they wanted to convey in their own artwork.

Talent Show

In October, Ger Village children took part in a talent show with 250 other young people from 10 children's centres across Mongolia. This was an opportunity for our children to make new friends, build their confidence performing in public, and develop their sense of team spirit. Everyone was impressed by their commitment and self-discipline when preparing for the event, which paid off with some great performances and high scores from the judges.

Our team won bronze for solo and group singing, bronze for solo dancing, and silver and gold for two of the best musical instrument performances. We were all very proud of our Ger Village team who came fourth place overall in the competition.

Boys' Prison Talent Show

A talent contest was organised at the boys' prison for the teenagers to develop their performance skills and showcase what they learned in their music classes. It was beautiful to watch the boys proudly display their newfound ukulele, guitar, and singing talents. Events like this not only help build the boys' self-esteem, but also create a sense of community spirit and mutual respect between the boys and staff at the prison.

Felt Ger Making with the Chinese International School

Every year, a group of students from the Chinese International School in Hong Kong visits our Ger Village. This year, our specialised crafts class students taught the Chinese International School teenagers and teachers how to make their own personalised felt gers, which they took home as a special reminder of their trip. Although the children did not share the same language and came from very different backgrounds, it was beautiful to watch them communicate and connect through creativity and fun.





OUR STORIES

Art heals

13-year-old Tuvshuu* lives with her mother and five younger siblings in a ger donated by CNCF. The family received a ger after our social workers became aware of their dangerous living conditions. Sadly, the children's father has psychosis, and as a result of his hallucinations, used to become physically and mentally abusive to Tuul and the children. Thanks to CNCF's Give-a-Ger Programme, the family are now living in security and warmth in a home of their own.

Tuvshuu's mother is unable to work because she has to take care of the children who all suffer with medical conditions. Most notably, Tuvshuu's twin sisters were born with heart defects and later diagnosed with epilepsy and hydrocephalus. Sadly, they were also recently diagnosed with psychosis, which causes them to experience hallucinations.

As a result of Tuvshuu's incredibly difficult upbringing, she has post-traumatic stress disorder. She also has severe stomach problems, which have to be closely monitored by the doctor.

When Tuvshuu was enrolled in the Child Sponsorship Programme three years ago, she was a timid, quick-tempered, and uncommunicative child. She rarely smiled and had low energy. Whenever our social workers visited her home, they noticed she was always drawing, and thus, they invited her and her siblings to join CNCF's art and crafts classes.

Since then, Tuvshuu has never missed a lesson, and her mood and overall outlook on life are greatly improved. She is calmer, more confident, and is relaxed and happy when talking to people. She has made lots of new friends in the class, and her whole demeanour has changed from a once anxious and quiet child to one who is full of life and charisma. Her art skills are improving with each lesson, and her passion for the subject is continually developing. It has been beautiful to watch Tuvshuu channel her pain through art and use creativity to release trapped childhood trauma.

In June, Tuvshuu participated in a children's rights drawing competition organised by Our Hearts for The Children Movement. Around one hundred young people from across the country participated in the event, which encouraged the use of imagination to draw attention to critical human rights issues. Tuvshuu entered a piece based on her own experience of domestic abuse. The powerful painting depicted her parents arguing with her in the middle, and her sibling imagining a loving and happy family sitting around a table together.

Her painting won first place, and Tuvshuu was awarded a bike and certificate for her outstanding achievement. We are so proud of Tuvshuu, who was able to communicate an issue that had affected her life so strongly, in such a powerful, honest, and effective way.

*Names changed to protect privacy.



My three younger sisters and I started going to the CNCF art class two years ago. I had never been to an art lesson before and straight away I loved it. I really like my teacher; he always encourages me and has helped me feel much more confident. There is a very nice atmosphere in the class, it is calm and friendly, and my social worker and teacher always talk to me heart-to-heart.

This year, I came first place in an art competition about children's rights and domestic abuse. My painting meant a lot to me as it is something I have experienced in my family. I couldn't believe it when I won; I felt very proud and was so excited to receive a new bike and a certificate as my prize. I always used to dream of having a bike, and now that dream has come true. I now have a new dream, which is to become a talented fashion designer. CNCF's art class has given me the opportunity to grow and have hopes for the future. Thank you so much!

- Testimonial from Tuvshuu -

Art Transforms

9-year-old Pagma* lives with her father, mother, older sister, and two younger brothers in a small ger on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar. Pagma's mother is unable to work because she has to stay home to care for her 1-year-old son and a 13-year-old daughter who has cerebral palsy.

Pagma's father hasn't been able to find a steady job but tries his best to support the family through part-time work such as selling coal or working on construction sites. The family's living conditions are extremely tough, and with no stable income, they mainly rely on the CNCF sponsorship money, a small disability allowance, and a government food coupon to survive.

Pagma was enrolled in the Child Sponsorship Programme in 2016. Due to her stressful living environment and her parents' regular arguing, when we first met Pagma, she was suffering from a great deal of trauma. She was very anxious and found it difficult to make eye contact. She also got angry and defensive easily, making it difficult for her to make friends.

As with all of the children on our programme, we discussed ways we could support Pagma beyond monthly financial assistance and suggested she take part in our art classes.

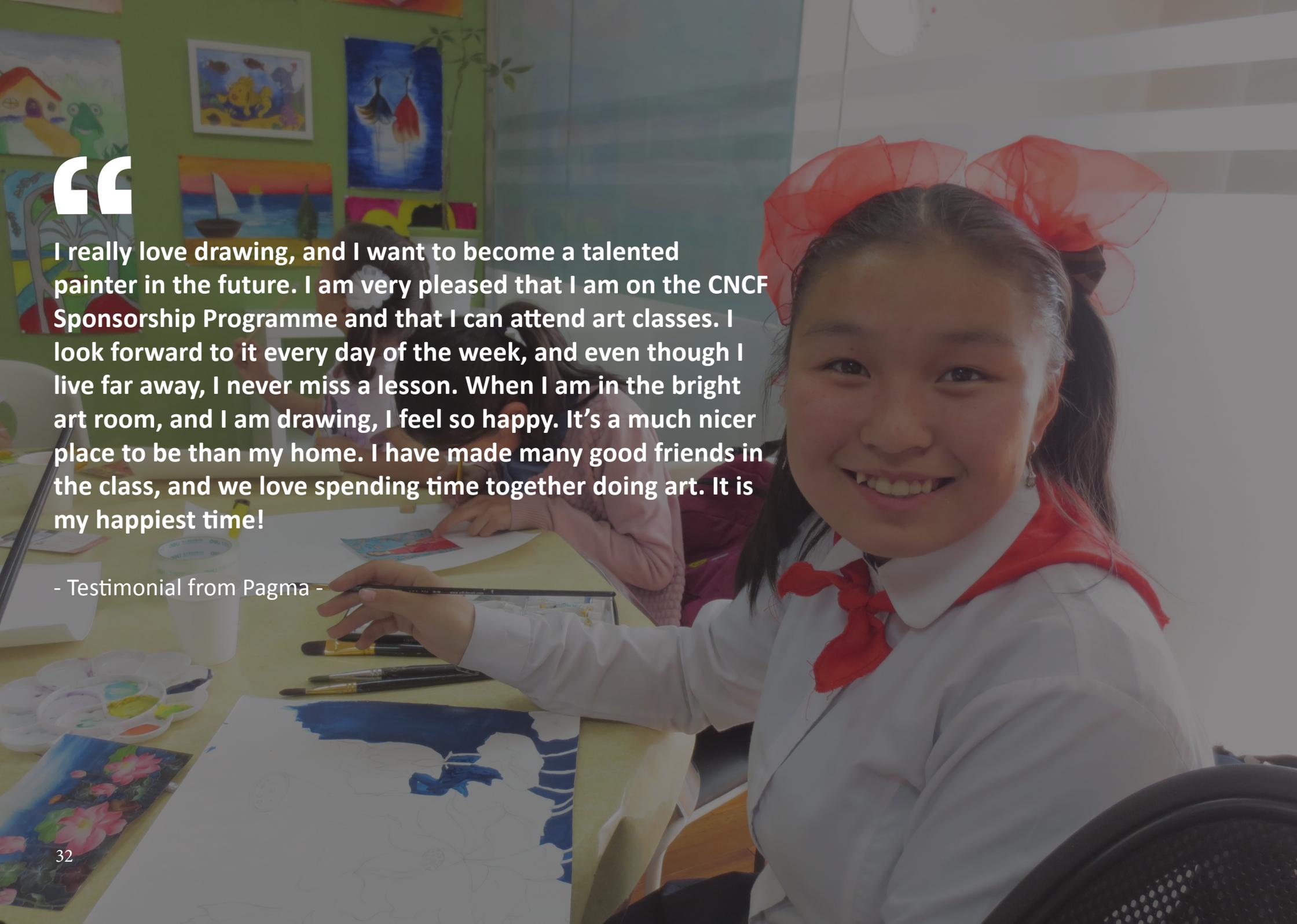
She has now been attending the class regularly for two years, and we have been extremely pleased to see the significant transformation that has taken place. When Pagma first began attending the lessons, she would mainly use dark colours, and her paintings were always full of sadness and pain. She didn't like to interact with the other children or the teacher and kept to herself.

Over time, this began to change. With the gentle guidance and encouragement of our art teacher and social workers, Pagma began to open up and become a much happier, lighthearted child. This can be seen in her artwork; if you were to compare her old and new work, you would think they had been drawn by different children. Her recent art is full of colour and radiates joy.

Pagma is now one of the most outgoing students in class and is always laughing and joking with the other children and staff. She has formed a very close and trusting relationship with her teacher, who is helping her develop her artistic skills and express her emotions in her work.

In November, Pagma organised an exhibition at her school where she showcased her artwork from CNCF's classes to the students and teachers. We were so proud to see her captivating pieces displayed on the walls and hear her talk with such confidence and pride about her pictures and the meanings behind them.

*Names changed to protect privacy.



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I really love drawing, and I want to become a talented painter in the future. I am very pleased that I am on the CNCF Sponsorship Programme and that I can attend art classes. I look forward to it every day of the week, and even though I live far away, I never miss a lesson. When I am in the bright art room, and I am drawing, I feel so happy. It's a much nicer place to be than my home. I have made many good friends in the class, and we love spending time together doing art. It is my happiest time!

- Testimonial from Pagma -



Art Saves

18-year-old Gankhet* came to the boys' prison in May of this year. Before arriving at the prison, Gankhet was living in extremely difficult conditions with his grandmother and two siblings. The family had no stable income and his elderly grandmother, who was suffering from ill-health, was unable to care for the children. Their difficult living conditions lead to Gankhet committing theft and being sent to the boys' prison.

When Gankhet arrived, he had many behavioural challenges, which on a few occasions resulted in him being sent to the detention centre. He was a very angry young man, who often lost control and acted aggressively toward the other boys and staff. It was clear that he was a lost child in need of love, guidance, psychological support, and help in developing new ways to deal with his emotions.

Our team enrolled Gankhet in art class; however, at first, he often did not show up or left during the lessons. Through the encouragement and gentle discipline of our teachers, Gankhet stopped missing lessons and started to get involved in the activities. Our art teacher took a relaxed approach with Gankhet, allowing him to draw what he wanted and providing lots of praise for his work and efforts.

After a few classes, he began to show a keen interest and enthusiasm for the subject, arriving on time and often not wanting the lessons to end. In a very short period, his skills have significantly improved, and he is now one of the most advanced students in the class. When he draws and paints, Gankhet becomes intensely focused and entranced by his work. He enjoys talking about the meanings behind his pieces, which allows him to release pent-up emotions that were causing him to lose his temper.

After seeing his commitment and passion for the subject, we gave Gankhet some drawing supplies to use in his dorm. He now sits alone for hours at a time, silently immersed in his work and communicating his inner world onto paper.

Through the healing qualities of art, combined with our team's ongoing support and encouragement, Gankhet has become a very different boy to the one who first arrived. He is much calmer and in control of his emotions and has started listening to the other boys and showing respect to the community. Most importantly, art has helped him develop a sense of pride and purpose.

*Names changed to protect privacy.



A Mother's Message

"My twin daughters began attending CNCF's art classes in 2016. The lessons are always different and allow each child to express their imagination and individuality through art. My girls love going to the classes and always leave feeling happy and uplifted. The classroom is a very comfortable and relaxed place to create, with all the children's pictures surrounding them on the wall. I can see how much their art is improving and how much more confident they are now. As a mother, this has been very special for me to watch. CNCF has not just supported us financially, but through the art classes, my children have been able to discover a new talent and do something that inspires them."

From the Children's Perspective

Child Sponsorship Art Student

"I live with my single father and two sisters in the ger district of Ulaanbaatar. Life for us is extremely tough. My father packs coal for a living and only earns a small amount of money. We could never afford to buy anything or do any activities like the other children. In my free time I had nowhere to go, so I always just stayed at home.

In 2018, just after I enrolled in CNCF's Child Sponsorship Programme, I began attending their crafts classes. I was extremely excited, and it is now the best part of my week! I have had so many fun times and have met lots of nice children. I have also learned how to make things out of felt and have become very talented at handicrafts. I want to say a huge thank you for this opportunity. I feel so lucky!"

Boys' Prison Art Student

"I am sixteen years old and I received a six-month sentence for theft. Before I was sent to prison, I lived with my father and three younger siblings. My father used to have tuberculosis and was unable to work for four years. Fortunately, he is better now; however, his health still isn't stable.

As I am the oldest child, I was the one to take responsibility for my family. It has been a long time since I went to school because I had to work so that we could afford to buy food. I remember my first few years of school, but that happy time didn't last long. When I was in year four, my mother just left us all for no reason. After that, I stopped going to school. I know in my head that she isn't coming back to us, but I still have hope in my heart that my mother will return home and life will be better again.

When I was sentenced for theft, my father was very upset. He felt bad for being an irresponsible father, but I don't blame him for anything.

Art was one of the very first classes I had when I arrived in prison. In the beginning, I didn't have any interest in art and thought it was a boring waste of time.

For some reason, it has brought back all my good memories and has given me time to reflect on what has happened in my life. I cannot describe what it brings to me emotionally, but I can be sure that this feeling is special, a feeling I have never felt before. If I try to describe it, I would use the word peace. Yes, art has brought peace into my heart, and it has given me the opportunity to think clearly again."

*Names changed to protect privacy.

REPORT 2018

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The total cost of running the Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme in 2018 was

USD \$23,889.69



Thank you to The Sovereign Art Foundation who have enabled CNCF to keep this project operating since 2011.

<https://www.sovereignartfoundation.com>

Thank you also to those who generously support with gift, support and time in-kind throughout the year which enables us to keep our annual costs down.

Our 2018 audits are available on line here.



BLUE SKIES ARTS & MUSIC EXPENDITURE 2018

DESCRIPTION	BUDGET 2018 USD \$	ACTUALS IN 2018 USD \$	VARIANCE ACTUAL VS BUDGET 2018 USD \$
Art Workshops	3,000.00	2,986.57	13.43
Crafts Workshops	1,100.00	1,363.82	(263.82)
Dance Classes	3,700.00	2,260.85	1,439.15
Supplies and Equipment	3,500.00	3,745.07	(245.07)
Salaries & National Insurance (5 Teachers)	11,461.00	10,764.78	696.22
Electricity, Firewood & Coal	1,200.00	1,118.74	81.26
Miscellaneous / Others	1,300.00	1,649.86	(349.8)
TOTAL COST	\$25,261.00	\$23,889.69	\$1,371.31



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