



Boys' Prison Education Programme Annual Report 2016



A man in a dark suit and tie is sitting at a green desk, writing in a spiral notebook with a silver pen. His face is blurred. In the background, there are green cubicles, a computer monitor, and educational charts on the wall.

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

We establish long-term relationships with the children we support and empower them to live happy, emotionally rich, and independent lives.



Mama Tina

Thank you

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By funding our Boys' Prison Education Programme you are helping to support these young men by giving them the opportunity to receive an education and earn their qualifications – the same as any other child in the country.

The boys also learn important skills that help to prepare them for life when they are released, and increase the chances of successfully reintegrating with their communities and breaking the cycle of poverty for good.

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PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Established	1997
Location	Public school number 110, Bayanzurkh district
Objectives	To provide rehabilitation and education to young offending boys through academic and vocational training, and the delivery of personal, social and life skills
Programme Components	Education – following the public education core curriculum as set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science; additional arts and information technology classes; vocational training; personal development and psychology training; extracurricular activities
Beneficiaries	Boys serving at the Ulaanbaatar Brigade 411 boys' prison
Local Partners	General Executive Agency of Court Decisions, National Authority for Children
CNCF Involvement	Responsible for the funding, implementation and management of the education programme including vocational and life skills training
CNCF Staff	Two curriculum teachers, one Information Technology (IT) teacher, one art teacher, and one vocational educator (bakery)
Monitoring and Evaluation	Regular meetings with the Director of Operations, regular government inspections conducted by the National Authority for Children and the National Inspection Agency; monthly and annual reporting
2016 Actual Costs	\$18,075.88 USD
Reporting Period	January-December 2016

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PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

"...I wanted to open the prison gates and get all these children out. 'Do they get any kind of education here?' I asked Dr Boshigtt, and he shook his head."

– Christina Noble

The Christina Noble Children's Foundation has played a central role in pioneering reform in Mongolia's juvenile detention system, leading to a fundamental change in the way the nation's young offenders are perceived and managed.

Soon after arriving in Mongolia for the first time in 1997, Christina Noble worked relentlessly and tirelessly alongside key forward-thinking members of government, and spearheaded the creation of "Official School 110" within the walls of Ulaanbaatar's boys' prison. This was a monumental achievement that marked the fundamental shift of a penal system that had previously existed to punish and condemn to a more empowering and progressive system of education and rehabilitation.

All the boys in the prison can now attend school and receive the same education and qualifications as any child in the city. For the vast majority of these children it is often the only time in their lives that they have been supported, believed in, and guided by well-meaning and positive adults.

Since 1997, 2,358 boys have received an education through the programme.



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OUR YEAR

2016 Highlights

A national amnesty law was passed in November 2015 which resulted in the number of boys in prison being significantly reduced. The law pardoned all prisoners across the country who had committed petty crimes such as theft and vandalism, or who had caused accidental harm such as in the case of manslaughter. Anyone who had committed these acts before 1 July 2015 was released with a warning. Subsequently the beneficiaries of our programme were significantly reduced for 2016.

Following the amnesty law many of the Ulaanbaatar boys' prison NGO partners withdrew their support, as the revised number of beneficiaries did not meet their 'funding criteria'. However, as the Christina Noble Children's Foundation's philosophy is to value each child as an individual, and not merely a statistic, we continued to provide the same level of support that we always have – working with these young men and delivering the services that they so greatly need. Over time the number of boys will again steadily increase. Here is an overview of our highlights during 2016:

- Fourteen boys received public education through our Boys' Prison Education Programme
- Over the course of the year:
 - Three students were released
 - Seven students transferred in
 - Four of the older boys were transferred to the men's prison
- The boys were allocated to the following academic groups:
 - Four students in the primary group
 - Three students in the middle group
 - Seven students in secondary group



BOYS' PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

14 boys who were in prison studied at school through our Education Programme

3 students were released

4 students were transferred to an adult prison

7 boys were transferred into the Boys' Prison

4 boys studied in the primary group

3 boys studied in the middle group

7 boys studied in the secondary group

5 boys graduated school

1 received a Certificate of 5th Grade Education

2 received a Certificate of 9th Grade Education

2 received a Certificate of 10th Grade Education

14 boys participated in our *Blue Skies Arts & Music Programme*

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- Five boys graduated school: one student received a Certificate of 5th Grade Education, two students received a Certificate of 9th Grade Education, and two students received a Certificate of 10th Grade Education.
- All boys participated in extracurricular art classes.
- One student successfully competed in the National Biology Olympiad. He was the first student in the history of our school to participate. The special occasion was marked with a televised interview by the SBN news channel. It was an extremely proud moment for us all.
- Special exemption was negotiated with the General Executive Agency of Court Decisions to allow one boy to remain at the boys' prison after his eighteenth birthday so that he can complete his studies in a safe and supportive environment, as opposed to being transferred to the adult's prison where conditions are much more difficult.
- The prison moved location from Khan-Uul district in the south of Ulaanbaatar to a new location thirty kilometers east of the city. The new location was in a state of disrepair, so the Foundation helped to finance the renovations of a new classroom block.
- To honour International Women's Day the students participated in a national competition entitled 'Letter To My Mother' organized by the Mongolian National Broadcasting television channel. From over 3,000 entries we are very proud to say that one of our boys achieved 4th place.
- The Christina Noble Children's Foundation received an official "Award of Appreciation and Longstanding Co-Operation" from the Ulaanbaatar boys' prison.



Christina Noble Children's Foundation Director of Operations Thomas Minter attends each graduation ceremony to congratulate the boys and hand out their certificates and small gifts.

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PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

National Curriculum Education

The majority of the children often arrive at the prison with a notable lack of basic academic comprehension and communication skills. Many boys have either had no prior schooling or have had to drop out of school. The Boys' Prison Education Programme helps these boys to attend school and receive the same education and qualifications as any child in the city. The 110th public school adheres to the curriculum as specified by the Ministry of Education that is followed by all mainstream schools. The curriculum covers English, Mongolian, Mongolian Literature, Mongolian traditional writing, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Russian.



Our humanities teacher Enkhsaikhan, and our head teacher Tungalag.

Students are assigned to national grade levels, allowing them to either begin or resume their education. This is assessed on several criteria:

- Grade level at the time of dropping out
- Number of years without consistent education
- Proficiency tests designed to establish knowledge, skills, interest level, and natural ability

The students are then assessed quarterly to determine proficiency and progress. At the end of the academic year a decision is made on whether to advance the student to the next grade. When the students have successfully completed the curriculum they are awarded with a Certificate of Graduation.

Fourteen students were officially enrolled in the school this year. Seven students studied at secondary level, three middle level, and four at elementary level. Five students took temperament and interest assessments in order for us to adapt our work to best serve their individual needs.

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Five boys were awarded the following qualifications at the end of the 2015-16 academic year:

- One student received a Certificate of 5th Grade Education
- Two students received a Certificate of 9th Grade Education
- Two students received a Certificate of 10th Grade Education

As of 31 December 2016 – after all the releases and transfers during the year – seven students are attending classes.

Extracurricular Activities

The boys' prison management team and the Foundation are always keen for the boys to participate in interesting and useful activities and trainings in order to inspire these young men, spark their imaginations, and educate them about their history, culture, and the modern world.

Some extracurricular activities this year were:

- Personal development workshops and trainings – topics included learning about the workings of a business, which included talks from managers at a local chocolate factory, and a partner from a commercial farm. The company representatives spoke about their production methods, management and administration systems, sales and marketing, and other important information about the overall functioning of a business. Other workshops included sustainability, teamwork, and caring for one's community.
- Cultural events such as poetry recitals, discussions, and debates on a wide range of topics that included history, ethics, and current affairs. In addition, regular culturally-themed movies and documentaries were watched and then discussed, along with musical events.



Many of the boys we receive have had no prior schooling. We work to create a supportive and nurturing environment where they can develop an enjoyment for learning.

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- Regular traditional Mongolian script “spelling bee” competitions helped the boys build knowledge of Mongolia’s traditional writing system. Traditional script was used in Mongolia for hundreds of years before the introduction of the Russian Cyrillic alphabet.
- The boys are always encouraged participate in activities and games that further their mentally and social development. With the renovation of the new common room, chess has been taught to all the students and has become very popular.
- During the academic breaks, students took part in various sporting competitions in order to develop their fitness and build a greater sense of community and team spirit.
- In partnership with a Asral NGO, meditation and mindfulness is taught to all the boys. The boys meditate for nine minutes every morning as part of their daily routine, and prison staff have noted the boys’ behaviour and overall demeanour is continually improving.
- A New Year’s celebration was held for the students, their close relatives, and the prison staff, to come together and reflect on the boys’ achievements throughout the academic year. All of our boys were given New Year’s presents, certificates, and other gifts to congratulate them for their personal progress. A small concert was hosted by the boys to showcase their talents and a special holiday dinner was served to bring in the New Year with luck and happiness.



Traditional Mongolian writing classes (above), and the boys playing chess (below)



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Bakery Vocational Training

The Foundation has long-supported the prison's bakery vocational training programme. This year, however, due to the prison relocation, bakery classes were suspended until the necessary electrical systems were installed that could power the industrial ovens.

Bakery training is normally held twice a week by our Foundation's baker, Deegii, with students being awarded a vocational certificate after attending sixty hours of tuition over twenty sessions.

As well as learning how to bake, the programme also teaches many useful lifeskills such as focus, patience, planning, and problem-solving. The students often talk about having a great sense of achievement after learning how to bake a variety of pastries, breads, and cakes.

After completing the programme many students are able to use their newly acquired knowledge and skills by assisting in the prison kitchen. This is a great source of pride for the best bakers.

The electrical upgrades were completed in December, and the bakery programme will recommence in full beginning from January 2017.



Our bakery teacher, Deegii, in our newly refurbished bakery room.

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Art Club

All fourteen students who were resident at the boys' prison this year participated in art lessons.

Classes ran twice a week during January but had to be put on hold until August while the prison relocated to its new site and underwent renovations. Unfortunately, due to the prison's new location being thirty kilometers outside of the city, our art teacher had to resign as she had no way of travelling to the new site.

In August a famous Mongolian artist named Mr Odgarig led a one-month course focusing on pencil drawing. During this time the boys learnt about how to create a range of textures and realistic looking artwork using different grades of graphite pencil.

Following this programme professional artist Tsolmonkhoo began working two afternoons a week at the prison, teaching the boys how to connect with their imaginations and express their creative selves through a variety of media such as acrylic, watercolour and clay.

Beautiful clay works of art created by our boys.





The boys enjoy expressing themselves through a variety of different media such as pastels, acrylics and clay.

For these young men, many of who have come from backgrounds characterised by poverty, hardship, and emotional pain, this dedicated time for self-expression is extremely valuable and can play an important role in their rehabilitation process, as they learn to creatively express their thoughts and feelings through art – often channeling and expressing difficult emotions in a constructive and healing way.

Much of the artwork produced by the boys is a clear reminder that within each troubled youth lies the heart of a pure and innocent child. Through art and creative self-expression they are able to rekindle this part of them that has very often been lost in a troubled childhood.

One boy remarked *“I may be imprisoned, but when I paint – I feel free.”*



Collaborative art workshop at the boys' prison: Every year a group of students from the Chinese International School (CIS), Hong Kong, visits the prison. The event is dedicated to promoting friendship and kinship between teenagers from Mongolia and overseas. This year's schedule included a collaborative art workshop where the teenagers were invited to work together to create a piece of art under the topics of "Friendship", "Life" and "Happiness". After some initial brainstorming between groups, the students started to draw together on a shared sheet of paper. Although they had only met an hour earlier, spoke different languages and knew very little about each other, the teenagers began to communicate through lines, forms and colour. The art session was an incredibly valuable exchange for both groups of teenagers, who despite coming from very different backgrounds were able to find common ground as human beings and connect with one another through creativity, self-expression and universal symbolism.

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RENOVATIONS

In February it was announced suddenly that the boys' prison would be moving from its site in the south of Ulaanbaatar to a new location about thirty kilometers east of the city. The new premises were in a state of disrepair, with no running water or any of the love and warmth that the prison Governor and the Foundation worked so hard to instill into the original prison.

When the boys moved, the new prison site was in an uninhabitable state and it was clear to see that extensive renovation and development work was needed. The new bleak location needed to be transformed into a warm home, and a positive learning environment that was conducive to the healthy psychological development of the boys.

With a very generous donation from Dublin-based law firm Mason Hayes & Curran we were able to fund the renovation and development of a new classroom block with three classrooms, a cultural room, and a music room, all of which have contributed greatly to the boys' academic and extracurricular learning. In addition to these educational areas a comfortable and uplifting communal room was created to give the boys a space where they could come together to relax, socialise and play games.

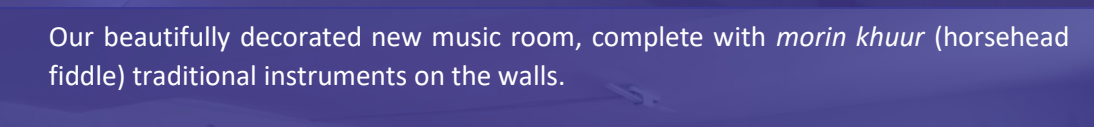
The prison is now a much warmer and supportive learning environment. There is still much work to be done, and with the ongoing love and support of the staff, the Foundation and our supporters, it will continue to improve and develop year after year.



Initially the new prison was cold, dark, and unhomely. Major renovation work was needed in order to create a safe, warm and comfortable environment for the boys to live and study.



The new communal area is a bright and comfortable space where the boys go to relax, play games and socialize.



Our beautifully decorated new music room, complete with *morin khuur* (horsehead fiddle) traditional instruments on the walls.



The new language room, complete with computers and audiovisual equipment for listening exercises.

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OUR STORIES

Altan's Story

For the past eight years the Mongolian National Broadcasting television channel has organised an annual competition called 'A Letter To My Mother'. The competition is open to children and adults of all ages and is very well known popular. This year there were more entries than ever before, with over 3,000 people submitting a letter and a poem to their mother.

Our head teacher at the boys' prison is always looking for opportunities to involve the teenagers in extracurricular activities that will help them develop their personal and academic skills, as well as facilitate their integration with society outside the prison. She therefore encouraged the boys to take part in the competition and to use it as a platform to connect with their mothers, sharing with them any emotions they may have found difficult to express in the past.

Five of our boys took part, all of whom wrote beautiful and heartfelt words. Their work was submitted, and after a few months of waiting eagerly we received the incredible news that one of our boys, seventeen-year-old Altan, had been chosen as one of ten finalists. We were over-the-moon and incredibly proud of Altan, whose meaningful words had transcended the prison walls and been embraced into the hearts of the judges.

A Letter To My Mother



I have seen my-self
In the reflection of you, my beautiful mother
As if gazing into Mongolia's most magnificent river
Your son had everything when growing up
Under the clear blue skies of the vast rolling steppe

Never did I think or dream
about being inside this place
Where no one would ever want to be
My mother earth with no father sky
As your son I should have given you my shoulder
But instead I have put you in ongoing anguish
that I am here

I am hugging you through these walls
and begging for your forgiveness
I promise you that I will not do this again,
my dear mother

You carried me in your body
and now, forevermore,
I carry you in my heart.

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Altan recently gave his mother a special piece of art that he had created for her during his art lessons. The Mongolian word “Ээж”, seen at the bottom of the piece, means

The next stage of the competition was held at the large and impressive National Mongolian Culture Concert Hall. Although Altan was unable to attend the special occasion due to being in prison, there was an incredibly important person there to represent him and to hear his touching words for herself: his mother.

During the event a professional stage performer read each of the finalists' work to a panel of judges and the large audience. When Altan's mother, who was sitting proudly at the front of the hall, heard her son's words tears quickly began to flood down her face. It was clear to see the painful journey they had been on together but also the powerful and unrelenting love of a mother and son.

After hearing the wonderful and heartwarming readings the judges made their final decision. We were overjoyed when Altan achieved 4th place, winning three literature books, a small but meaningful amount of money for his mother, and a special certificate for his achievement. But perhaps most importantly it gave Altan the opportunity to share his deepest feelings with the person he loves and respects most in the world.

Everyone at the Foundation is so proud of this young man's achievements and the beautiful kind heart that lies at the core of his words. He is a perfect example of why the Christina Noble Children's Foundation works so hard to continue to provide the facilities, guidance and care that supports the educational and emotional development of these young men during this difficult time in their lives.

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Saikhnaa's Story

Saikhnaa arrived at the boys' prison in 2015, when he was sixteen-years-old. He had grown up in extremely poverty stricken conditions with his mother, father and younger sister. His mother works as a cleaner in the city's trauma hospital, earning a small salary for long hours of physically tiring labour. Unfortunately, as is often the case with those living in such hard and destitute conditions, his father is a heavy drinker and unable to hold down steady employment.

As a young child Saikhnaa's passion was chemistry and biology. His dream was to be selected as one of the top students in his class so that he could study in the specialist group.

Sadly however, Saikhnaa just missed the grade requirements for this and was unable to participate in the higher-level lessons. This had a big impact on Saikhnaa, knocking his confidence and diminishing his motivation. Without a stable home life and supportive parents to nourish and guide him, Saikhnaa eventually dropped out of school and his dream of becoming a scientist was forgotten.

In the following years Saikhnaa found a job as a construction assistant and used the money he earned to help support his family. For a child of his age Saikhnaa was earning a relatively good salary and soon got a taste for the lifestyle that money brings. During this time he got involved with a gang of older boys who had faced similar challenges to him growing up. He found a sense of belonging within the group and quickly



Since arriving at the boys' prison Saikhnaa has learnt how to express himself in a more positive and rewarding way.



Our Head Teacher Tungalag has worked at the boys' prison for over sixteen years and is very experienced in getting the best from children from difficult and disadvantaged backgrounds.

became influenced by their often negative behaviour. He started getting involved in petty crimes with his friends, eventually resulting in him being arrested for theft and sent to the boys' prison to serve an eight-year sentence.

When Saikhnaa first arrived he used to behave aggressively towards the other boys and staff. He would get angry over minor issues easily and had a confrontational attitude with everyone who tried to interact with him. This led to Saikhnaa becoming isolated and avoided by the other boys.

Our team are experienced with young men like Saikhnaa, who often develop a tough and reactionary exterior in order to protect themselves. After spending one-on-one time with him in order to understand his life experiences, challenges, and aspirations, our team worked to restore his passion for biology and chemistry by providing continuous praise for his achievements during lesson time and helping to rebuild his self-esteem and motivation.

Saikhnaa was also encouraged to take part in our regular art lessons, where he began to build friendships with the other children in a relaxed, fun and open environment. Gradually we began to see improvements in his behaviour and he started to attend lessons with a positive attitude and an enthusiasm for learning. He became more receptive to advice, and stopped becoming defensive and argumentative.

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As our head teacher is always looking for new ways to motivate and inspire the boys, she researched a variety of different competitions and events that Saikhnaa could participate in. After working hard to negotiate a place, he was able to compete in the National Biology Olympiad.

In the weeks prior to the event, Saikhnaa spent each day dedicated to studying and improving his knowledge of the subject. He approached the competition with confidence and determination, which we are proud to say resulted in him receiving a highly commendable 4th place. Saikhnaa was incredibly proud of this achievement, saying to our teachers “I knew I would get this!”

Since the competition we have seen continued improvements in Saikhnaa’s behaviour, attitude, and overall outlook on life. He has become a very different person from the confused and angry child we first met in 2015. When he talks about his future his eyes light up and he describes his hopes and aspirations with enthusiasm, excitement and belief in his own ability to achieve his dreams.

Saikhnaa told our teachers that he now looks at life from a different perspective and is determined that when he leaves the prison he will create a beautiful and happy life for himself, away from crime and destructive behaviour. He said that he now understands the beauty of living in a positive way, with respect and appreciation of others.

From all of us at the Christina Noble Children’s Foundation Mongolia, especially our beautiful children, thank you for your love and support, and for believing that all children have the right to a happy, safe and enriching childhood. It is only through the kindness and generosity of people like yourself that the Foundation can continue in its incredibly important work.



Director of Operations Thomas Minter meets with the boys at special events and celebrations to congratulate them on their achievements.

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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

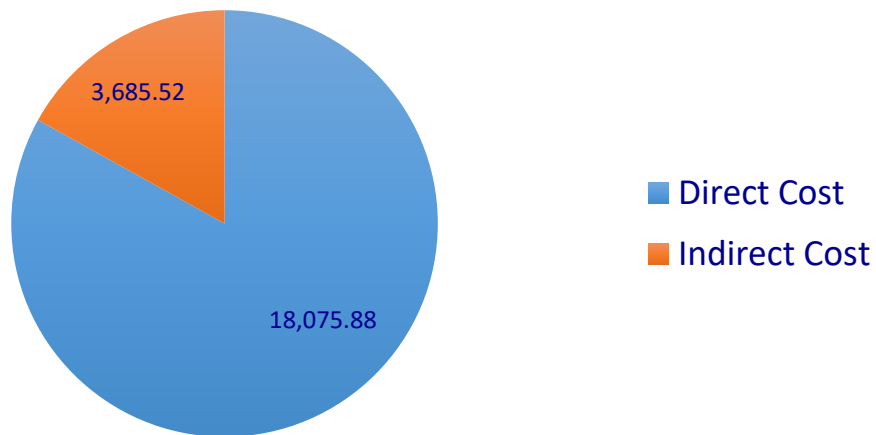
The total **direct cost** of the Boys' Prison Education Programme in 2016 was \$18,075.88 USD.

This includes all expenditure that is specific and dedicated to the running and operation of the programme such as teachers' salaries, school equipment and supplies, vocational and life skills trainings, and other education-related expenses. It does not include the cost of the renovations.

The **indirect cost** of supporting the programme was \$3,685.52 USD. This includes the salaries of CNCF Mongolia management and administration staff, office rent and utilities, stationery and supplies, communications, staff training, professional consultancy, and travel. This expenditure was paid for from the Foundation's administration budget.

The Boys' Prison Programme is funded by individual, corporate, and institutional donors. Our 2016 accounts are available upon request.

Expenditure - Boys Prison Education Programme





“Childhood is the foundation of life. Help us make it a good one!” – Christina Noble

Each of us is only one person. But by joining all the ones together, we can accomplish greatness. If you or your organisation is interested in supporting us in 2017/2018 please contact our Foundation. It is only through the love, care and generosity of others that we are able to continue our work with some of the world's most vulnerable children.

Christina Noble Children's Foundation – Mongolia

www.cncf.org | international@cncf.org | mongolia@cncf.org



CNCFmongolia | Head office UK: +44 20 7381 8550

