



# BOYS' PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAMME

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



## APPENDIX

<b>OUR VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES</b>	3	School opening ceremony	32
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	4	New basketball court	34
<b>PROGRAMME OVERVIEW</b>	5	Cultural events	34
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	6	General knowledge quizzes	34
<b>PROGRAMME BACKGROUND</b>	8	Sporting events	34
Message from Tungalag Damdinsuren, Boys' Prison Education Programme manager	9	New Year's Celebration	34
<b>OUR YEAR</b>	10	Art exhibition	35
<b>PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES</b>	13	Talent show	35
National curriculum education	15	Chinese International School visit	35
English class	15	<b>OUR STORIES</b>	36
Bakery vocational training	15	Overcoming tragedy	36
Art class	17	Parent testimonial	37
Craft	19	Testimonial from boys' prison Governor, Tamir Batbileg	38
Music	19	<b>FINANCIAL OVERVIEW</b>	39
Message from CNCF's music teacher about his work in the boys' prison	20		
Health	21		
Education scholarship programme for former boys' prison students	22		
Noble Club	25		
Personal development training	27		
<b>HIGHLIGHTS AND EVENTS</b>	28		
70th Anniversary Celebration	28		
Staff awards	29		
International Children's Day	29		
Graduation ceremony	31		
Writing competitions	31		

## ABBREVIATIONS

**CNCF** Christina Noble Children's Foundation



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

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

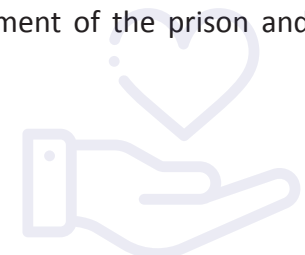


# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



By donating to our Boys' Prison Education Programme, you help support boys and young men by giving them the opportunity to receive an education and earn the qualifications they need to build a brighter future. The young people also learn essential skills that help prepare them for life when they are released and increase their chances of successfully reintegrating into their communities and breaking the cycle of poverty and crime.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a special thank you to the Boys' Prison Governor, Tamir Batbileg, for his dedicated service. We would also like to welcome new Deputy Governor, N. Tsend, to his position and thank him for the care and commitment that he has demonstrated to the future development of the prison and its continued improvement.



REPORT 2018

# PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

## ESTABLISHED

1997

## LOCATION

Public School Number 110, Bayanzurkh district, Khonkhor Urtuu

## OBJECTIVES

To provide the facilities, services, guidance, and care to support the boys' educational and emotional development while in prison and enable them to achieve the necessary qualifications and skills to break the cycle of poverty and crime once they are released.

## PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

Education that follows the public education core curriculum as set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science; art and bakery classes; vocational training; personal development workshops; extracurricular activities

## BENEFICIARIES

Boys serving at the Ulaanbaatar Brigade 411 boys' prison



## LOCAL PARTNERS

General Court of Mongolia; Family, Child and Youth Development Agency; Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science; Asral NGO; Policy Training Centre

## CNCF INVOLVEMENT

Responsible for funding, implementation, and management of the education programme including vocational and life skills training

## CNCF MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Thomas Minter, Director of Operations; Tungalag Damdinsuren, Education Programme Manager; Enkhsaikhan Batsuuri, Programme Officer and Elementary Teacher; Delgermaa Enebish, Bakery Vocational Training Teacher; Gonchig Lkhagva, Music Teacher; Altansukh Purevdorj, Art Teacher; Erdenetuya Dungaa, English Teacher

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Regular meetings with the Director of Operations; government inspections conducted by the National Authority for Children and the National Inspection Agency; monthly and annual reporting.

## 2018 ACTUAL COSTS

USD \$ 21,155

## REPORTING PERIOD

January – December 2018

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN 2018

The Boys' Prison Education Programme continued to provide facilities, services, guidance and care to support the educational and emotional development of boys in prison, so they can achieve the necessary qualifications and skills to break the cycle of poverty and crime once they are released.

This year, the programme provided education and extracurricular activities to



**130**  
BOYS

**127** BOYS  
were transferred to the prison

**85** BOYS  
Left

**45** BOYS

reside at the prison including **38** who are receiving education that follows the public education core curriculum, vocational training, and access to extracurricular activities.





The future of our world is the future of our children...our beautiful children. For many of them, it is a matter of giving them back their future, giving them a life, giving them hope.



- Christina Noble OBE -





# PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

The Christina Noble Children's Foundation (CNCF) 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 the 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.

Thanks to the Boys' Prison Education Programme, all boys in prison can now attend school and receive the same education and qualifications as any other child in the country. For the clear majority of these children, it is often the only time in their lives they have received consistent schooling and been supported, believed in, and guided by well-meaning and positive adults.





REPORT 2018

## Message from Tungalag Damdinsuren, Boys' Prison Education Programme Manager



I feel truly blessed to have the opportunity to help vulnerable children. I have been working at the boys' prison for over fifteen years now, during which time I have witnessed so many troubled young children transform into confident and capable young men with a drive to succeed and live their lives to the fullest.

I firmly believe education is the pathway for these boys. It is the only way they can escape their often-hopeless home situations and create a fulfilling life, a life where they have inspiration, possibility, and freedom. The education they receive in prison gives them wings to fly.

Many of the boys who come here have had no previous school experience. They often can't read, write, or count. It always makes me feel very sad to see that these children were not given a chance to succeed. However, the minute you start teaching them you begin to see them change—it's as if a candle has been lit inside them.

At first, the boys often feel embarrassed about their lack of education. They feel they are to blame or that they aren't capable. As they start to improve, it's incredible to see the boys begin to believe in themselves and understand they are no different from other children who go to school.

I believe that I am the bridge between Christina and the boys. I always try to support them with all my heart and soul, caring for them as Christina would.

# REPORT 2018 OUR YEAR

On July 5, 2018, a change in criminal law in Mongolia resulted in a significant increase in the number of boys sent to prison. The old law excused first-time offenders, but now anyone who commits a crime receives a sentence. Thus, our Prison Education Programme's work is even more vital. These boys deserve a chance to build a better future and it starts with education.

## 2018 BY THE NUMBERS

**127** BOYS  
were transferred to the prison

**85** BOYS  
were released, of which:

**05**  
boys

were transferred to  
an adult prison

**21**  
boys

completed their  
sentence and were  
released

**59**  
boys

were released  
due to good  
behaviour before  
their sentence was  
completed

**130** BOYS  
were allocated to the following  
academic groups:

**20**  
boys

Primary/Elementary  
School (grades 1-5)

**30**  
boys

Middle School  
(grades 6-9)

**65**  
boys

High School  
(grades 10-12)

**15**  
boys

Not attending school  
because they have  
either already finished  
high school/vocational  
training, or they were  
only there for a short  
period. These boys  
did, however, have the  
opportunity to take  
part in extracurricular  
activities

The ages of the  
**130**  
BOYS

**01**  
boys

14 years old

**03**  
boys

15 years old

**35**  
boys

16 years old

**71**  
boys

17 years old

**15**  
boys

18 years old

**05**  
boys

19 years old

IN 2018

**115** BOYS  
who attended curriculum-based schooling  
were allocated to the following grades:

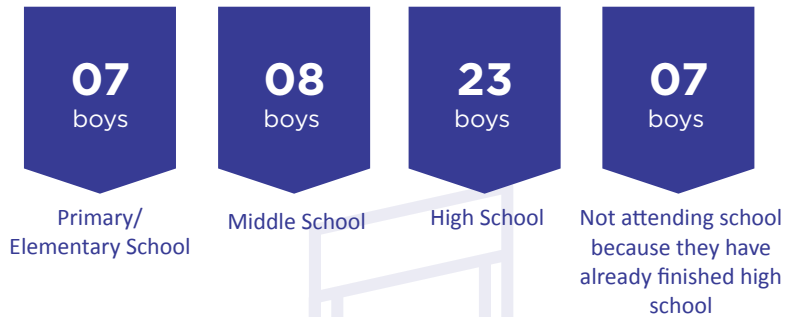


Grade	Number of boys
1	5
2	3
3	4
4	2
5	6
6	7
7	2
8	9
9	12
10	33
11	20
12	12

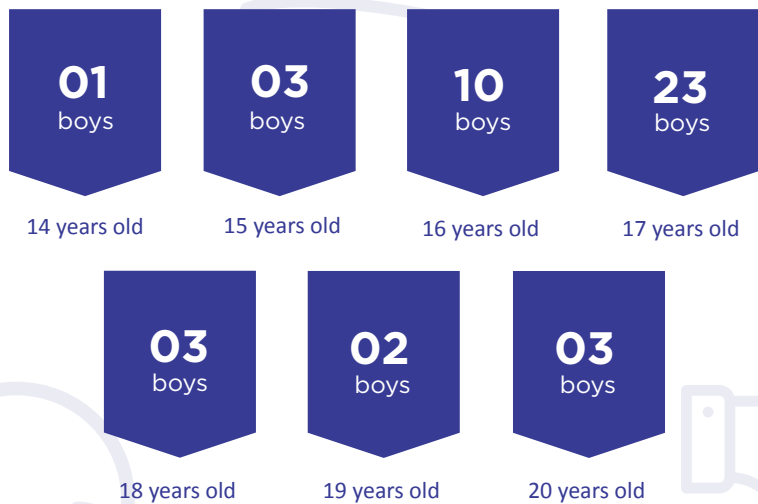
## 2018 BY THE NUMBERS

**45** BOYS are in prison as of the 31 December 2018

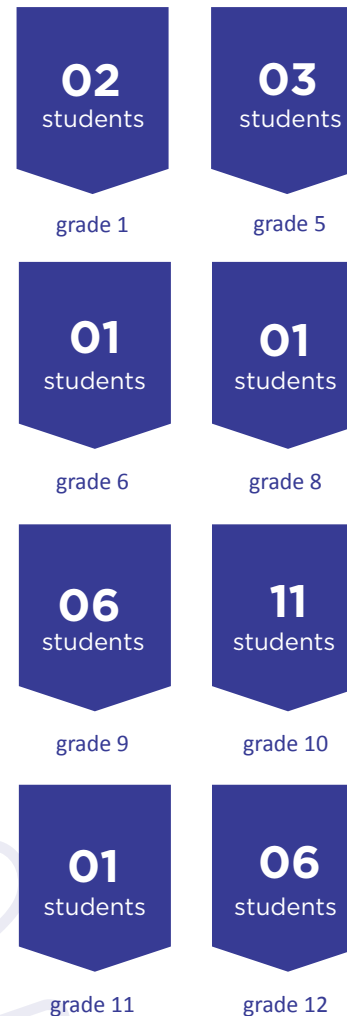
**45** BOYS were allocated to the following academic groups:



**45** BOYS were released, of which:



In June, a National Education Exam took place which determines whether students can move up to the next grade. **31 boys** who were in prison at the time were able to take the exam. All **31 students** passed the exam and were able to move to the next grade.



**45** BOYS who attend school are allocated to the following grades:



Grade	Number of boys
1	2
2	0
3	3
4	0
5	2
6	2
7	0
8	3
9	3
10	8
11	12
12	3

When students complete **grades 5, 9, or 12** they receive an official Certificate of Graduation which marks the conclusion of their primary, middle, or high school education.

**03**  
boys

completed primary school

**06**  
boys

completed middle school

**06**  
boys

completed high school

**06**  
students

took their university entrance exams while in prison and passed.

**04** BOYS

are now studying at university

**02** BOYS

were in prison at the time of the university enrollment deadline and will defer until after they are released.

**04**  
students

received scholarships

**03**  
students

were awarded scholarships through CNCF's Education Scholarship Programme

**01**  
students

received a scholarship from the government.

**95** BOYS  
attended English classes

**102** BOYS  
attended art class

**46** BOYS  
attended music classes

**24** STUDENTS  
received their bakery vocational training certificates after completing 60 hours of practical and 20 hours of theoretical training

**106** ATTENDED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES  
run in collaboration with the Policy Research Centre

**63** BOYS  
received health check-ups by doctors from the National Centre for Maternal and Child Health

**39** BOYS  
received a one-month supply of Vitamin D supplements

# PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

## National Curriculum Education

Most children arrive at the prison with a notable lack of basic academic comprehension and communication skills. Many boys have either had no prior schooling, attended infrequently, or dropped out. The Boys' Prison Education Programme allows these boys to attend school and receive the same education and qualifications as any other child in the country.

Official School 110 adheres to the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science curriculum followed by all mainstream schools. The curriculum covers English, Mongolian, Mongolian Literature, traditional Mongolian writing, Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Russian.

Students are assigned to national grade levels, allowing them to either begin or resume their education. Grade level is determined based 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

Grade levels are grouped into three different stages of education: elementary/primary school, middle school and high school. Students receive acknowledgement of 'Successful Completion' at each grade level and are awarded an official Certificate of Graduation when they complete 5th, 9th, and 12th grades, which mark the conclusion of their elementary, middle and high school education.

The boys are assessed quarterly to measure proficiency and progress and identify areas in need of particular attention. Subject-specific tests are also given to the boys every month to support their learning and help them become accustomed to the examination process.

At the end of the academic year, the students take General Education Exams set by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Their results in these exams determine whether they are eligible to move up to the next grade.

In 2018, 115 students were officially enrolled in the school (20 elementary school, 30 middle school, and 65 high school). Of these, 31 were in prison at the time of the General Education Exams; all students passed the exams and progressed to the next grade. Among the 31 boys, 5 completed primary school, 6 completed middle school, and 6 completed high school.

The students who took their General Education Exams did exceptionally well and showed impressive improvements since arriving at the prison. For these boys, all of whom came from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds and had not received regular schooling, their results are a remarkable achievement and highlight the effectiveness of our programme.

Furthermore, with the support of our team, 6 students prepared for their university entrance exams while in prison and were able to leave for the day, accompanied by staff, to sit for the exam. We are delighted that all 6 boys passed and 4 are now studying at university; 3 received scholarships through CNCF's Education Scholarship Programme and 1 received a government scholarship with the help of our education team. The other 2 boys were still in prison at the time of the university enrollment deadline and will defer until after their release.

This is a phenomenal achievement for these young men and a testament to the importance of the Boys' Prison Education Programme. These young men are now able to embark on a bright and fulfilling future, following their dreams and living a life full of possibility.

# STUDENT PERSPECTIVE



Before I came here, I lived with my stepmother and younger brother. My brother has been living in an orphanage for the last five years because of our difficult circumstances.

In 2007, I went to school for the first time in first grade. However, soon after that I was sick and couldn't go to school. I stayed in a hospital for nine months and never went back.

I wanted to go to school, but after I got out of the hospital, my parents divorced and started living separately. I used to stay in-between their homes and so I couldn't go to school because I was always moving from place to place.

Eventually, in 2011, I started going to an unofficial school. I felt ashamed that I couldn't even read or count. I went there for a few months but didn't want to continue because it wasn't a friendly environment and I felt embarrassed about my academic ability. After that, I started helping my father at his work and gave up on the idea of an education.



I came to the boys' prison because I committed theft. When I arrived, I thought it would just be prison. I had no idea that there would be a school; it turned out so different from my expectations. I was very happy that there was a school and teachers who were kind and willing to help me. They treated us as equals.

When I arrived, I was put in first grade and was given a new school uniform. Having a new, proper uniform had always been my dream. It made me feel proud, included, and excited that I was just like the other children who woke up and went to school every day.

One of my biggest fears when I got here was someone asking me to read because I didn't know how. But now I can read and count! One of my favourite subjects is Mongolian literature and language class. I've also started reading books, which I really enjoy.

Now that I have a basic education, I would like to study at a vocational training centre to become a builder. My father is a builder and I want to continue his life and do the things that he hasn't been able to achieve.

One day very soon, the boy who was once in prison will become a qualified construction worker and will contribute to his country's development through hard work. Thank you CNCF and the boys' prison for enabling my dream.

– Boys' Prison Education Programme Student, age 17



## English Classes

English lessons are mandatory for all children starting in sixth grade. Our students are divided into four groups based on their grade level and participate in up to five 45-minute classes a week. The boys enjoy learning English and are quickly developing their language skills with consistent practice. We believe helping the boys learn English plays an important role in increasing their future opportunities and enriches their lives.




## Bakery Vocational Training

For eleven years our Foundation has provided bakery training for the young men in the prison. In total, 342 boys have received vocational certificates after attending 60 hours of practical training and 20 hours of theoretical training.

Bakery training is delivered by our Foundation's baker, Delgermaa Enebish. The boys are often surprised by how much they enjoy the sessions and are always happy to share what they make with the prison staff, their family members, and visitors. As the boys have no money or items of material value, it brings them great joy to be able to give something that they have made with love to those they care about.

The programme also teaches many useful life skills such as focus, patience, planning, and problem-solving. The students often talk about having a great sense of achievement after learning how to bake pastries, bread, and cakes.

After completing the programme, many students can use their newly acquired knowledge and skills assisting in the prison kitchen. This is a great source of pride for the best bakers. In some cases, students who develop a particular passion for the subject choose to continue baking as a profession after leaving prison.



In 2018, 24 students received their bakery vocational training certificates and 5 other boys took part in lessons but were released before completing the course.



## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE



I am not the same boy who first came to the boys' prison; I am an entirely different person now.

When I first arrived, my opinion was that prison was a prison. They had taken all my freedom away because of my behaviour. Now, after living here for a while, I want to bring all my bad friends here to make them realise who they really are. One thing I have learned here is that you need to know your vision and values in life. Or else you are a person lost in an endless forest.

I want to say a big thank you to CNCF for caring about our interests and development. All my extra activities after school have given me time to learn about myself and made me realise who I am. I love all my activities and baking in particular. Before coming here, I didn't know how to cook anything. But now I feel encouraged to see what I can make. I want to say thank you to my teachers for being such an inspiration in my life. I love baking, decorating, and seeing people eating my cakes and cookies. It makes me happy when I see them enjoying it.

My teacher once said to me "commitment is better than talent," which has opened up my world. I now believe in commitment and dedication. I believe they are the biggest things that we need to follow to make changes in our life.

– Boys' Prison Education Student







## Art Class

Each week, two 3-hour art lessons are taught at the Boys' Prison by professional artist Altansukh Purevdorj. The classes are aimed at building the boys' confidence and ability to express themselves. Lessons focus on the basics of drawing. For many of the boys, art is an entirely new experience, and it is important to start with simple techniques and concepts to help them feel comfortable. Once the boys gain a basic understanding, coloured pencils and paints are introduced.

This year, 102 students attended art class, and as a result, we have seen significant improvements in the boys' attitudes and behaviours. 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.

### Message from the CNCF Boys' Prison Art Teacher



Most of the boys who come to prison are traumatised and emotionally unstable because of their backgrounds and their 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 for 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, they can see a brighter future, and are excited to build the life they are aiming for. Art helps the teenagers control their feelings and gives them an opportunity to communicate with their inner souls as well as others around them.

REPORT 2018

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE



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 that 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 it helps me calm down and 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.

– Boys' Prison Art Student, age 18



## Music

Music has the unique ability to connect with and heal aspects of the soul. It fuels and inspires the mind, stirs emotions, relieves anxieties, and creates memories that we carry with us throughout our lives. Christina Noble believes in the magical and reviving capabilities of music, describing many lonely and desperate times as a child where music and singing were her only forms of escape and connection to a world beyond her horrific daily reality.

In March, we were happy to be able 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.

The students love attending their music lessons and have developed their skills with commitment and practice. It is always clear to see their progress at special events when the boys perform what they have learned with pride and confidence.

In 2018, 46 students attended music classes.

## Crafts

In partnership with Asral NGO, from January to May the boys were able to develop their creative skills through weekly 2.5-hour 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. They also developed essential skills such as patience, focus, listening, and following instructions.

We hope to continue craft classes at the prison in 2019, with the objective of starting a self-funding business.





REPORT

## MESSAGE FROM CNCF'S MUSIC TEACHER ABOUT HIS WORK IN THE BOYS' PRISON

“

In March, I started working as a music teacher in the boys' prison. I feel very touched 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 tough 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 great satisfaction.

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 feel encouraged by their dedication and passion for the subject—when they play music or sing a song, it

### Student Perspective

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 a really amazing feeling!

– Boys' Prison Music Student

# HEALTH

In October, doctors from the National Centre for Maternal and Child Health visited the prison to give ENT, dental, eye, and urology examinations, along with general check-ups and healthcare advice. 63 boys who were in prison at the time benefited from the examinations, most of whom had never received professional health care services previously.

The check-ups showed there were no major problems with the boys' health. However, the doctors recommended some of the boys take Vitamin D supplements to help improve their immune systems and support their cardiovascular and bone health.

Through CNCF's Health Care Programme, 39 boys received a one-month supply of Vitamin D. Our Foundation's doctor tracked the boys' progress and found that on average they gained 2.5 kgs and increased in height by about 1.5 cms. The boys' general health also improved, and there was a significant decrease in cold and flu outbreaks in the prison.



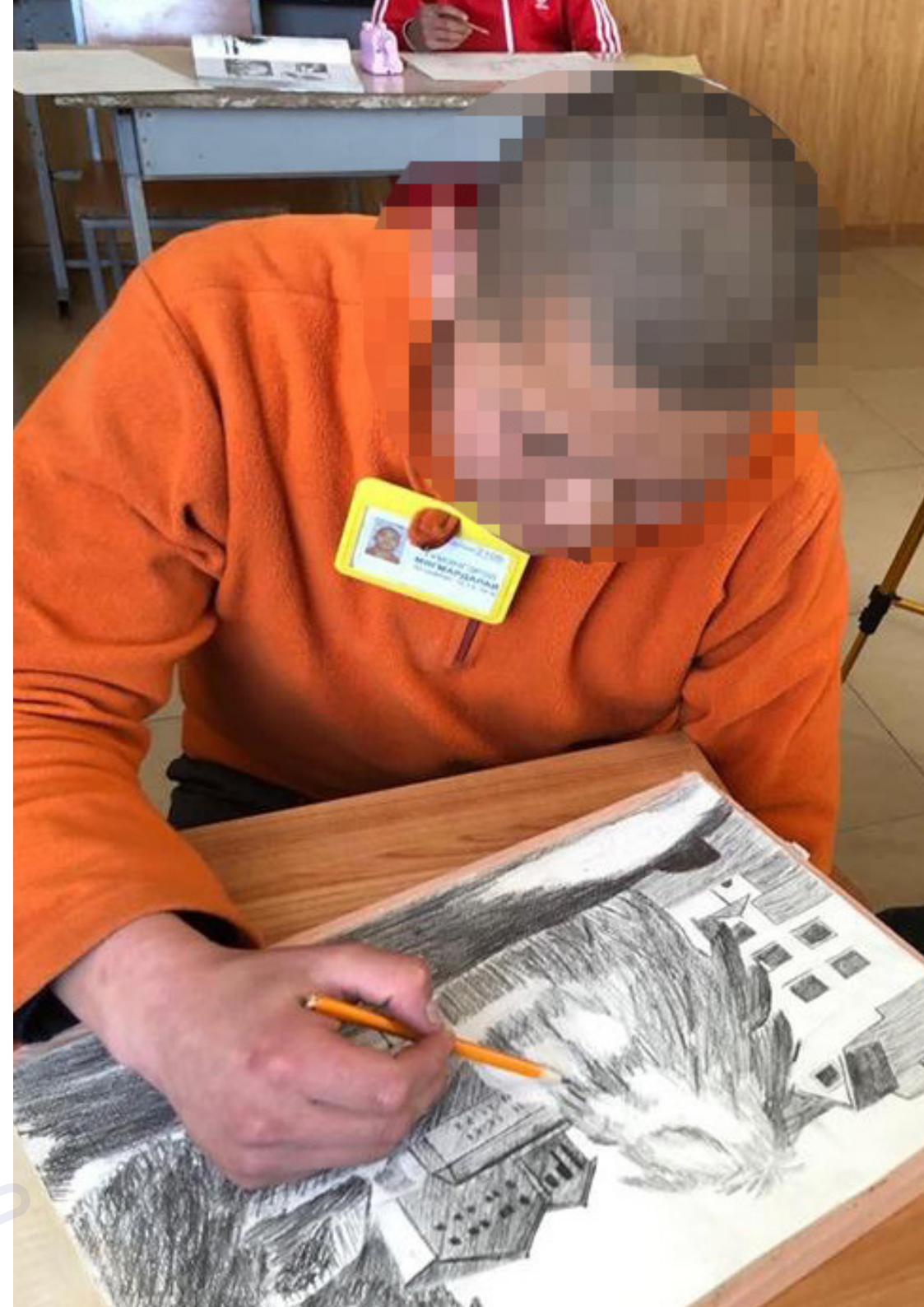
## Education Scholarship Programme for Former Boys' Prison Students

CNCF's Education Scholarship Fund was established to give children from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to pursue higher education. As a result of the programme, many ambitious, talented, and motivated young people who would have otherwise had no choice but to leave school unskilled and become unemployed have been able to develop their skills and interests to become qualified, fulfilled, and leading members of Mongolian society.

This year, 6 students in the boys' prison sat for their university entrance exams and passed. Four of the boys who were released in time to meet the university enrollment deadline are now studying at university and the other two deferred until after their release.

Thanks to the Education Scholarship Programme, three of the students were able to afford their university tuition fees and embark on this next exciting chapter of their lives. Our teachers helped the fourth student successfully apply for a government scholarship.

The four boys are now at university studying Law, Social Work, Mechanical Engineering, and Sports Science. We are incredibly proud of their achievements and look forward to seeing them blossom in their lives outside of prison.





REPORT 2018

# STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

“

When I first came to the boys' prison, I was terrified and didn't know what to expect. I felt like my future was dark and that I had no more life left to live. But then I found out that there was a school and that I could continue my studies. I had a dream to study law and become a lawyer like my father, living the life that he has never lived. I was very happy to hear that I could study while I was in prison and even take my university entrance exam, which I did. Now I am out of prison and studying Law at university.

CNCF has been a big supporter in my life. They were there for me in prison and have never left me. They continue to support me now by helping me apply for a government scholarship and bringing me into their community service group Noble Club. I feel part of the CNCF family and am very grateful and proud of that. Thank you CNCF for making my life better.

– Former Boys' Prison Student, age 18





REPORT 2018

# STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

“

It took me a long time to realise who I was. Before I was sent to prison, I was a simple boy who had no passion, no goal, and no confidence. I have realised that I was living a life that no one ever wants to live.

I missed my mother very much when I first came to prison but soon after my arrival I had no time to think and feel sorry myself. I was busy studying at school as well as attending extracurricular activities in my spare time such as art, music, and learning to bake. Furthermore, with the encouragement of CNCF teachers, I started practicing for my university entrance exam. They made me believe in myself, and they inspired me with their actions.

I could never have dreamed that I would be a university student. But here I am, now studying to become a mechanical engineer at one of the most prestigious engineering schools in Mongolia with a grant from CNCF's Education Scholarship Programme. My whole life has changed because CNCF believed in me and gave me the support I needed to turn myself around and become a successful person. Thank you for giving me a chance!

– Former Boys' Prison Student, age 18





# NOBLE CLUB

The Noble Club is a community service group made up of young people (ages 16 and up) either currently or formerly enrolled in one of CNCF's programmes. The club, which currently has 133 members, was established in May 2018 with the purpose of giving back to the community and contributing to the development of Mongolia.

Three former boys' prison students are currently Noble Club members and the club has played a particularly important role in their successful integration into society. Being part of an accepting group of young people has helped the boys develop their confidence and sense of self-worth. They have made new friends who inspire and uplift them, which has helped them stay away from destructive people and places.

# STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

“

I had never done volunteer work before because I always thought if you work, you get paid. CNCF has helped me realise you cannot always be a taker; you should also give back to the community with what you have. If I only help one child or one mother, then that is still enough. Helping others has so much meaning and gives me a beautiful feeling inside. Maybe that is why Christina started her work making things possible for others.

– Former Boys' Prison Student, age 18

“

I wasn't CNCF's child anymore when I did my volunteering job. I was a member of the Foundation's team. I was able to do good things like my role models. All the CNCF staff are born to help others, which has encouraged me and helped me learn about the value of compassion. I have learned to respect, love, and care for all people during my volunteering work at CNCF.

– Former Boys' Prison Student, age 20

“

Ever since I was in prison, I wanted to give back to CNCF for all their hard work and care for us. Luckily, I was invited to join CNCF's Noble Club as a scholarship awardee. When I was working at the distribution day, I realised there are so many children who are living in extremely difficult situations, some far worse than mine. This gave me more strength to do even better. Doing something for others is the best feeling I have ever had.

– Former Boys' Prison Student, age 18





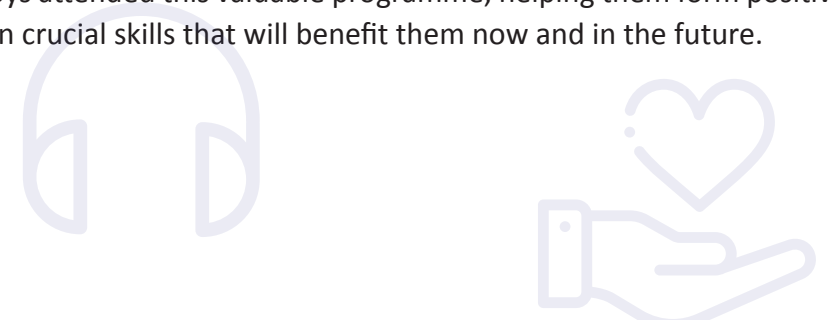
REPORT 2018

# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Our team is always looking for ways to develop the boys' character and skills while they are in prison so when they are released they have a strong foundation to build upon. Personal development courses play an essential role in this process, complimenting their academic schooling with activities and seminars to further improve their employability and enhance their quality of life. The training sessions help the boys gain self-belief, strength of character, and practical skills, which allow them to re-enter society and realise their dreams and aspirations.

This year, two 10-week personal development courses were held in collaboration with the Policy Research Centre. The 1.5-hour sessions took place once a week and covered various topics including Vision, Goal Setting, Diligence and Continuous Development, Mastering a Profession, Integrity, Healthy Habits for a Healthy Life, Family Planning, and What is Friendship?

In 2018, 106 boys attended this valuable programme, helping them form positive habits and learn crucial skills that will benefit them now and in the future.





REPORT 2018

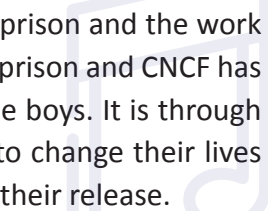

# HIGHLIGHTS AND EVENTS



## 70th Anniversary Celebration

The boys' prison invited former members of staff, governors, and representatives from the General Court of Mongolia to celebrate its 70th Anniversary. During the celebration, the boys showcased what they have learned in their extracurricular art and music classes and baked a selection of cakes and pastries for the visitors to enjoy.

To mark the special occasion, a book about the history of the prison and the work of CNCF was published. The book talks about the progress the prison and CNCF has made over the years and the impact our work is having on the boys. It is through our combined efforts that many young men have been able to change their lives and become happy, successful, and contributing citizens after their release.



## STAFF AWARDS

- ◆ During the Boys' Prison 70th Anniversary Celebration, our Education Programme Manager, Tungalag Damdinsuren, received an award for being the Best Employee of the Education Sector from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
- ◆ Our Programme Officer and Elementary Teacher, Enkhsaikhan Batsuuri, received the For Children Medal from the Child, Family and Youth Development Agency.

## International Children's Day

To celebrate International Children's Day, a celebration was organised at the prison, which included music, dance, singing, and poetry performances by the boys and heart-warming speeches from the prison staff, CNCF Director of Operations, and students.

The event was attended by the boys' families and friends, CNCF staff, prison employees, and members of our government partner organisations.

Our talented students baked delicious cakes and proudly displayed their arts and crafts.

It was a beautiful day for everyone involved, which highlighted the importance of our work in helping these young men build a strong foundation for their future lives.





## GRADUATION CEREMONY

We held a graduation ceremony to celebrate the achievements of our students who received their official Certificate of Graduation and completed their primary, secondary, or high school education. We are incredibly proud of these young men, who through their hard work and commitment combined with the support of our education team, have managed to achieve something that many would have thought impossible.

## WRITING COMPETITIONS

Our education team are always looking for opportunities for the students to push their perceived boundaries, discover new capabilities, and develop their social and academic skills. This year, the boys took part in a variety of writing competitions, which helped them cultivate excitement for learning.

### The competitions included:

- ◆ **Our Heart Companion** – A national competition for which the boys submitted an essay in response to the prompt “I Have Something To Say.” One of the boy’s essay received 2nd place in the nation and another received 4th place. We are incredibly proud of all our students who took part.
- ◆ **Hand Writing Competition** – The boys’ prison education team organised a hand writing competition to help cultivate the students’ writing skills, focus, and attention to detail. The students took part in regular practice sessions four weeks before the event, which helped them learn how to concentrate on their work without distraction.
- ◆ **‘Anti-Corruption’ Essay Writing Competition** – Ten students took part in an “Anti-Corruption” essay writing competition, in which they had to explain how corruption is affecting our lives and how we can solve the problem. The event was organised by the District Governor’s Department to celebrate Ulaanbaatar’s 379th anniversary.
- ◆ **Future Career Essay Writing Competition** – To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Labour Department, a national essay writing competition was organised. Children from all over the country submitted essays about their future career aspirations and dreams in life. Fourteen of our students took part in the competition and are currently waiting for the results to be announced. This was a valuable opportunity for our children to build a vision and sense of excitement for what their life could look like once they are released.
- ◆ **A Letter to My Mother: Poetry Competition** – To honour International Women’s Day, thirteen students participated in a national poetry competition, “A Letter To My Mother,” organised by the Mongolian National Broadcasting Channel. The annual competition has been running for the past nine years and is a popular event across Mongolia for adults and children of all ages. Although none of the boys were selected as finalists, the competition was a valuable opportunity for the students to connect with their creative side and express their thoughts and feelings to their mothers.

# SCHOOL OPENING CEREMONY

In September, at the beginning of the academic year, we held a school opening ceremony to wish the boys lots of success and happiness in their year ahead. Family members, friends, prison employees, and CNCF staff attended the event, which included performances from the children and encouraging speeches from our Foundation's Director of Operations, the Prison Governor, and CNCF's Head Teacher.

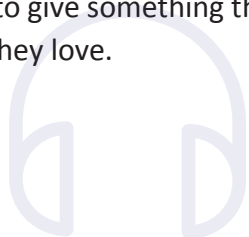
Educational supplies such as bags, pencil cases, and books were given to the students, who were excited and encouraged to have new equipment for their classes. The boys prepared a delicious selection of baked goods for the event, which they handed out with great pride and happiness that they were able to give something that they had made to those they love.

## Student Perspectives

“

I have never been to a school opening ceremony before. It was exciting! CNCF gave me a brand-new uniform and lots of school supplies. I have always dreamed about going to school with all new things, but it has never happened to me until now. I am blessed to have so many good people around me, and that what I thought would be the worst place in the world (the boys' prison) has turned out to be the best. It has exposed me to education and many other beautiful things.

– Boys' Prison Student







# NEW BASKETBALL COURT

In partnership with the Policy Training Centre, the surface of the basketball court was repaved, creating a more enjoyable and safer place for the boys to play games and keep fit. Special thanks to the Director of the Policy Training Centre, Erdenegerel Gambat, who raised funds for the project.

## Cultural Events

Poetry recitals, discussions, and debates on a wide range of topics including history, ethics, and current affairs were organised throughout the year to inspire the minds of our students. The boys also watched and discussed a variety of educational movies and documentaries, which helped them broaden their perspectives and gain access to a world beyond the prison walls.

## General Knowledge Quizzes

General knowledge quizzes were held throughout the year. The students loved taking part in the quizzes, which developed their knowledge in a fun and social way.

## Sporting Events

During the academic breaks, students took part in various sporting competitions (basketball, tennis, and football) to develop their fitness and build a greater sense of community and team spirit.

## New Year's Celebration

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 year. All our boys were given New Year's presents, certificates, and other gifts to congratulate them on their progress. A small concert was hosted by the boys to showcase their talents and a special holiday dinner was served.



## Art Exhibition

In May, an exhibition was arranged at the boys' prison to showcase the students' art work. 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 boys.

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.

## Talent Show

A talent show was organised so the boys could practice their performance skills and showcase what they learned in music classes. It was beautiful to watch the boys proudly display their newfound talents in the ukulele, guitar, and singing. 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 prison staff.

## Chinese International School Visit

Students and teachers from the Chinese International School (CIS), Hong Kong, visited the prison to spend an afternoon playing basketball and creating collaborative works of art with the boys. The day also involved a special performance by the boys and CIS students, where both groups showcased their talents in a variety of dance and music acts. CIS's visit to the prison provided an important learning opportunity for all the teenagers, who despite coming from very different backgrounds and speaking different languages, were able to find common ground as human beings and connect through creativity, fun, and self-expression.



# OUR STORIES

## Overcoming Tragedy

I am 17 years old. I came to Ulaanbaatar in 2010 from Zavkhan province with my family. My parents got divorced when I was little, and my mother remarried. I lived with my stepfather and my mother before I came here. My life wasn't easy as a young child. My stepfather drank a lot and used to abuse my mother and me. We had no food to eat and sometimes we had no coal to heat our home. It was difficult for me to go to school because I wasn't like the other children. But still, I tried and tried. I knew one thing, I knew I needed an education, I knew I needed to at least finish high school to be able to get a job. My dream was to take my mother away from the man who made our life a disaster.

One day, a day that changed my life, he came home completely drunk and started to beat my mother badly. I tried to protect my mother and hit him back. Unfortunately, he hit his head as he fell and died and I was sent to prison leaving my mother on her own.

I came here in April 2018 and was given a 7-year sentence. I felt terrible - in just one day my mother had lost her husband forever and her son for seven years.

Since I came here, I have been studying and practising for my university entrance exam to study architecture. Becoming an architect is my dream and my life goal.

One dark day this year, I learned that my mother passed away, so I am all alone. My life is now empty without my loving mother, my life feels like a black hole. I am studying even harder now to succeed and to show my mother her son is doing well because she is always here with me in my heart.

Although I have sadness, I have hope for a future. CNCF has helped me to realise that and given me all the opportunities to build a base so that when I leave here I can get a job and live a good life.

I am so thankful to CNCF and my teachers who have loved and cared for me so well. They are all I have, and I would be completely lost without their love and support.

Thank you, everyone, for being my parents.





REPORT 2018

# PARENT TESTIMONIAL



I am a simple father of five children living in poverty. I want to say a few words from my heart to all of the teachers and staff at CNCF.

My son made a mistake and was sent to prison for a year. A prison which ended up helping him to become a new person, a responsible, caring, and creative person. CNCF has given my son something that we couldn't; they have made him realise what he wants from life and helped him achieve it.

During his time in prison, my son earned a qualification in baking, learned to play musical instruments, and attended a top personal development course.

My son is now a student at one of the best teachers' institutes in the country, the Mongolian National University of Teachers, studying to become a PE teacher and coach. CNCF's staff prepared my son for the university entrance exam and helped him to apply to CNCF's Education Scholarship Programme, which he was accepted to and given a scholarship.

Thank you for coming into our lives and making us better.

What happened to my son and I feels like a dream now. I feel like it is magic because we would never have been able to afford to send my son to university and my son would have never had the ambition to study. I believe that my son will live a life that his parents never could.

REPORT 2018

## TESTIMONIAL FROM BOYS' PRISON GOVERNOR, TAMIR BATBILEG



All the work that we do for the children is done with much care, and we sincerely hope that the many everyday actions of our staff eventually enable the boys to blossom into happy, fulfilled, and independent adults.

Every person goes through childhood, and in many ways always remains a child. Even a 60-year-old person still looks like a child to their 80-year-old parents.

But only a few people have the courage to love children from their heart, and only a few of them have the heart to do good things for them and make a difference in their lives.

Working with children is challenging, especially working with children who are traumatised. They need to understand the children, and they need to have a lot of time, patience, and compassion for them.

CNCF's successful and sustainable work at the boys' prison is a result of their combined hard work and unconditional love for the children—all children, no matter what.

The Foundation started its work in the prison in 1997 to help the boys... Over the years, they have impacted many lives through their education, arts and music, and development programmes, all of which they have sustained despite periods of political and economic instability in Mongolia.

Many of the boys here are victims of poverty and difficult life circumstances. They are naive children who have made bad decisions as a result of hardship and lack of positive adult role models. CNCF believes in them as the children they are and treats each child as an individual with his own unique character, capabilities, and needs. They respect the boys and treat them as equals.

The relationship that CNCF builds with the boys continues after they leave prison; they continue to care and support them after they are released and work with them to improve their situations.

We as a country appreciate their great help and dedication to the children of Mongolia, who will one day become the decision makers of the country. The boys' lives are very different today than what they could have been because they had CNCF standing by their sides.

REPORT 2018

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The total cost of running the Boys' Prison Education Programme in 2018 was:

USD \$21,155

Heartfelt thanks to our kind donors who enable CNCF to keep this project operating and also to those who generously support with gift and time in-kind which enables us to keep our costs down.

Our 2018 audits are available on line  
<https://www.cncf.org/finance-policies>





For more information on this report and our CNCF projects in Mongolia please contact:

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