

Mapping: Urban poverty distribution

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This mapping study provide in depth insight into the distribution of urban poverty and environmental conditions in ger areas in Ulaanbaatar city.

Overall picture

Poverty is a widespread phenomenon in Mongolia and it is associated with the transition to a market economy that began in 1990s. The review of poverty assessments indicates that the number of poor people is gradually increasing and the income disparity and gap between urban and rural; ger and apartment areas are widening. For instance, in 1995, 36.3 per cent of the population was poor or below the income poverty line, in 1998 35.6 per cent and 36.1 per cent in 2003 (NSO, WB & UNDP, 2004 and Government of Mongolia & UNDP, 2004). In the last five years, number of poor people increased by 50,200 people and more than half of this increase was in urban areas. According

to the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) 2002-2003, half of the poor people live in urban areas and one fourth of those live in Ulaanbaatar. The depth of poverty is 11 per cent in the country⁸ implying that, on average, the consumption of each person in the country is 11% below the poverty line. The severity of poverty reaches 4.7 per cent and this measure is sensitive to the distribution of consumption among the poor. The overall, poverty incidence, depth of poverty and severity of poverty decreased slightly during the last five years in the country. However, inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient is 0.33 and inequality is higher in Ulaanbaatar than other counterpart. In fact, the richest 20 per cent of the population consumes almost 5.6 times the amount consumed by the poorest 20 per cent of the population (NSO, WB & UNDP, 2004). Table 1 presents key poverty measures of Ulaanbaatar by ger and apartment areas separately.

Table 1. Key Poverty measures, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 2004

Poverty indicators	All	Ger areas	Apartment areas
<i>Income poverty</i>			
Below Poverty line (P0)	33%	45%	16%
Very poor (<60% of poverty line)	10%	14%	5%
Depth of Poverty (P1)	9.9	13.8	4.3
Severity of Poverty (P2)	4.3	6.0	1.8
<i>Inequality measures</i>			
80-20 decile dispersion ratio	5.6	4.4	5.4
Gini coefficient	0.34	0.28	0.33
<i>Capability poverty index</i>	24.5	39.3	2.9
<i>Social inclusion poverty index</i>	24.3	26.1	21.6

Data source: MOSWL, PTRC, UNDP, 2004. Urban Poverty and In-Migration: Survey Report, Chapter 7, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Population Teaching and Research Center, National University of Mongolia, United Nations Development Programm, Ulaanbaatar

Based on the urban poverty survey (MOSWL, PTRC & UNDP, 2004) estimates, 55 per cent of the population in Ulaanbaatar are poor either in terms of consumption expenditure, social inclusion or capability. Out of total population, 33 per cent of the sample population are poor in terms of consumption, 24.5 per cent are poor in terms of access to services and 24.3 per cent are poor in terms of social inclusion. Every one of ten is very poor. The poverty rate is higher in ger areas (45%) compared to apartment areas (16%). The depth of the poverty is higher and more severe in ger area. In other words, most ger residents are close to the poverty line and even the non-poor not far the poverty line compare to apartment residences (see Table 1). Data on poverty suggest the emergence poor and rich of people living in ger areas and apartment areas and gap between these two groups continues to widen. Housing appears to be correlated with poverty only in urban areas; population living in apartments are the least poor, while the opposite occurs in gers. Dwellers in houses and access to infrastructure services display a higher incidence of poverty, whereas in apartment areas having access to improved water sources, improved sanitation facilities or electricity is highly associated with less poverty.

Living environment especially air quality is a critical issue for people living in Ulaanbaatar. For instance, in the capital city due to increased air pollution, the respiratory diseases are common problem. This issue is evident during the winters when tens of thousands of households in the sprawling ger communities burn wood or low-quality coal to heat their home (AF & MMCG, 2006 and JICA, 2002). The power stations also contribute considerably to this pollution. This leaves a blanket of smoke on the city most morning that is not only unsightly but deleterious to the health of Ulaanbaatar's residents.

Air pollution is a substantial problem in Ulaanbaatar. Poor air quality is mostly caused by domestic smoke, industrial pollution and

dust. People in suburban areas have to put up with noise from power stations and smell and smoke generated by leather factories especially, in Bayankhoshuu and Tolgoit. Reduction of air and ground pollution not only have a beneficial affect on the ger areas but also on the entire city. The damage from smoke from coal, soil pollution, contamination of the well water in a site, and many matters are pointed out. Residents themselves also recognize the problems and want to cooperate. However, people lack their own initiative and drive to improve their livelihoods (AF & MMCG, 2006 and JICA, 2002).

Poverty distribution in Ulaanbaatar

Households in ger districts are vulnerable to poverty in greater measure compared to households in apartment area

Poverty is high in three khoros such as the 14th khoroo of Sukhbaatar district known as 4 Buudal, the first khoroo of the Songinohairhan district located behind the Gungervaa market in Tolgoit, the 17th khoroo of the Bayanzurh district located in Bayan Tayand near the Tsaiz market. Following explanation can be made related to degradation and pollution of the environment and ways used by population to sustain livelihood.

Environmental degradation becomes one of main reasons of poverty

Poverty is widespread in khoros where the environmental conditions are the most difficult particularly, soil pollution and the land with numerous ditches is inappropriate for building of apartment areas. As for the 4th khoroo of the Sukhbaatar district, it is one part of the former ger district of the capital city. Due to such reasons as neglecting the issue of protection from floods for many years and then building a flood dam without taking into consideration interests of the residents, it has swampy grounds. It is an area the most vulnerable to annual floods.

A new poverty zone emerged in the second Eastern region of the city

Poverty incidence is the highest in the areas nearby the Tsaiz market in Bayanzurkh district in the second Eastern zone of the city where numerous small enterprises on processing and production of iron, bones, plastics and construction materials, the Da Khuree market, and the raw materials market are located. Due to the above factors this area is highly polluted with exhausts and waste and lacks the minimal conditions for living environment of population. The number of poor households is the highest near Maakhuur tolgoi and the area behind the Bayanzurkh district office. It is one of ger districts which was quite poor in the socialist era and it grew even poorer in the transition period. It can be said that it has the highest degradation of living environment and its population is not able to overcome the generation-to-generation poverty. Since during transition period its population lost an opportunity to engage in small-scale livestock breeding at the outskirts of the city they lost the main source of their livelihood. The real face of poverty in households of the ger districts in the capital city can be seen here. Poverty is also widespread in the 14th khoroo of Bayanzurkh district in the eastern part of the city or in the ger district located behind the Infectious Diseases Hospital. This area suffered most from construction in the last years, the natural environment is degraded, especially soil pollution is high and it is at high risk of flood and rain waters. This area is bordering the central part of the city and the largest market of the capital city – the Narantuul market.

Residents of the second Eastern zone of the city work mostly at large markets and are engaged in such low-skilled, low-paid work as collecting waste from the markets, pushing carts, carrying loads, working on construction or digging pits. A big group of the poor has emerged here.

The ger district in the Western part of the city has become a poor district

Poverty incidence is high in 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 20th- all ger khorooos of the Songinokhairkhan district, namely in Tolgoit, Baganaran, Orbit, KMK (Khaniin Materialiin Komvinat) Bayankhoshuu and the new military village. Environmental conditions in these areas located in the Western part of the city have all characteristics of poor districts of large cities around the world. The meat processing plant, the water treatment station, power stations, numerous brick factories and the railway station are located here, which causes environmental pollution. Furthermore, the city's waste point was transferred into this region in the end of the 1990s. Exhausts, smoke, different kinds of waste, noise from stations create harsh conditions for living environment. Although some measures on relocating households in new places on the East, expanding the first khoroo of the Tolgoit, the majority of households are not connected to the power grid, do not have any conditions for accessing basic social and communal services. The Western part of Ulaanbaatar is the one where the main three roads out of four leading to and out of the city meet, i.e. the main way to the West, North and South are located, along with different industries. As the Population and Housing Census and studies on migration show, the majority of migrants to the capital city come from the Western, Northern and Southern regions and many of them stay in this part of the city. The population works mostly at the large markets, collecting waste, pushing carts, carrying loads, collecting bits of coal, timber and firewood, thus sustaining their livelihood.

Poverty is high in the former workers' district

Poverty is widespread in the ger district near Yarmag and Khan-Uul district. Households residing in this area moved here after the 1967 flood. Since access to communal and social services is low and it is located in the steppe

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