

Rural Education and Development Project

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The Mongolia Rural Education and Development (Read) Project has been approved by World Bank in May 2006 and started implementing from August, 2006. The project aims to help enhance education quality in rural primary school grades 1-5. There are three project components: Component 1 aims to support rural schools by increasing the amount of learning materials available to students and teachers while supporting teachers and their school networks in the use of learning materials. Within this component classroom libraries will be established to promote reading through professional development, professional teacher networks, and a public reading campaign. Component 2 strives to strengthen the government's capacity to monitor student learning through participation in national and international assessments. It strengthens national assessment and improves the efficiency of education policy tools. Component 3 provides financial and technical support for project management and monitoring of the project.

Within its first year, the project has succeeded in putting more than 200 titles of children's books on the market, establishing libraries in all rural schools of 11 aimags, and training hundreds of teachers. The books included in the classroom libraries were chosen through a competitive process that reviewed over 900 manuscripts. The books are included in the International Children's Digital Library. The distributions of books and the provision of training to all rural schools were completed by Fall September 2008.

From Spring 2008, additional financing were provided to support activities under *READ* by purchasing children's laptops, i.e. XO laptop computers, a proprietary item produced only by the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) organization, for *READ*-participating schools to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of education in rural Mongolia.

Questions to Think About

How much do you know about these projects – *READ* and *OLPC*? What are challenges and opportunities for these kinds of projects in Mongolia? Are there ways to address those challenges and opportunities?