



BLUE SKIES KINDERGARTEN MONGOLIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



“

When children are educated, they possess something which cannot be lost or taken away from them and which offers them some protection from exploitation and abuse. They will have more power in the labour market; they will be better equipped to provide for themselves in a way which protects their integrity and their dignity.

- Christina Noble OBE -



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ABBREVIATIONS

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
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.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

ESTABLISHED

2000

LOCATION

Blue Skies Ger Village, Songino Khairkhan District, Ulaanbaatar

OBJECTIVES

This programme aims to create a safe, secure and happy environment where disadvantaged children can develop socially and emotionally while learning the basic literacy and numeracy skills for primary school entry, in addition to cultivating healthy life habits, confidence and self-esteem and the ability to think creatively

BENEFICIARIES

Children under primary school age who are residents at CNCF's Blue Skies Ger Village and those living in poverty in the surrounding Songino Khairkhan district area

CNCF ACCOUNTABILITY

CNCF is entirely responsible for funding and programme management, monitoring and evaluation

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Regular meetings are held between the CNCF Kindergarten staff and the CNCF Ger Village management and psychosocial teams. Monitoring visits are conducted by CNCF's Director of Operations during programme activities to discuss any challenges and programme developments with the Kindergarten staff. All children meet regularly with CNCF's doctor for health check-ups. The National Authority conducts government inspections to ensure child safety practices are in place and the National Inspection Agency, as well as health and fire safety inspections by the local district authorities are also conducted regularly. A monthly report is completed by the programme manager and an annual report is made available to all stakeholders

2019 ACTUAL COSTS

USD \$40,494

REPORTING PERIOD

January - December 2019

2020 OBJECTIVES

- We aim to continue providing the vital services that support the educational, social, physical and psychological development of the children in our care and empowering their families to lead fulfilled and productive lives

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019, CNCF's Blue Skies Kindergarten continued to provide a secure and loving environment for children to develop socially and emotionally while learning basic literacy and numeracy skills in preparation for primary school.

In 2020, we will continue providing vital services that support the educational, social, physical and psychological development of the children in our care.

Since inception



**OVER
1,000
CHILDREN**

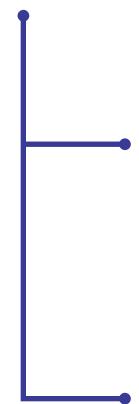
have been supported by CNCF's Blue Skies Kindergarten

In 2019



**90
CHILDREN**

received holistic care and education at CNCF's Blue Skies Kindergarten



**41
GIRLS**



**49
BOYS**

62 CHILDREN
enrolled in the spring term

67 CHILDREN
enrolled in the fall term





REPORT 2019

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The Christina Noble Children's Foundation (CNCF) expanded its work to Mongolia in 1997 with the establishment of the Blue Skies Ger Village, a residential care facility for children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds shaped by poverty, abuse and neglect. To support the educational and emotional development of our preschool children (ages one to six) residing at the Ger Village, the Blue Skies Kindergarten was established in 2000.

In response to the growing population of the surrounding district areas due to immigration, the Kindergarten expanded its reach with the construction of a new building in 2002, reaching the unmet needs of holistic support for children living in the community. Most children who attend the Kindergarten live in the 7th sub-district of Songino Khairkhan, where unemployment rates are high and living conditions are extremely poor. Many of these children come from single-parent homes that are struggling to survive without any financial or social support.

Due to the lack of access to free and quality preschool education, many parents have no option but to go to work and leave their young children at home unsupervised, often locked

inside their homes in unsafe conditions. By providing a safe learning environment for these children, we enable the parents to leave their children in our care while they seek employment knowing that they are safe, loved and receiving education, nutritious meals and healthcare, giving them the best possible start to life.

In addition to permanent Ger Village children and children from the local community, children temporarily staying at the Village are also enrolled in the Kindergarten whilst we work to locate their parents or find them permanent housing.

Our curriculum follows the national preschool educational system and focuses on each child's social and physical development through extracurricular activities such as outdoor exercises, excursions and arts and crafts. Each student also receives healthcare and personal development support. Life skills training is provided to the children's parents and guardians, enabling them to improve their quality of life and create a positive home environment.

To date, CNCF's Blue Skies Kindergarten remains the only free kindergarten in the local district and has provided holistic educational, emotional and healthcare support to more than 1,000 children, laying the groundwork for their primary school education.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Education

The children are assigned into two age-specific groups, each with different education programmes. Our kindergarten curriculum is aligned with the Ministry of Education's national preschool curriculum with a focus on topics including Family, Seasons, National Holidays, Tradition, Transportation, Animals and Nature.

Educational activities include physical exercise and health education; singing and instruments, storytelling with puppets, team games, group discussions and sharing ideas, creative arts such as painting, origami, crafts, and sculpting with play dough; information technology (IT) and science, role play, theatre arts and rehearsals in preparation for performances at special events and celebrations. These learning activities support the following six developmental focal points:

- Physical Health: Movement and sensory skills
- Communication & Literacy: Listening, speaking, literacy skills (reading, writing, comprehension, expression) and non-verbal communication skills
- Artistic Expression & Creativity: Expression of inspirations and feelings through drawing, painting, dance, singing, poetry, sculpture, movement and storytelling
- Cognitive Processing: Learning, developing memories and understanding surroundings
- Emotional Intelligence: Recognising, healing and managing emotions
- Social Connections: Cooperating skills and relationship development and maintenance



PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Montessori Introduction

In 2019, CNCF developed a child-focused Montessori education plan, which aims to develop all aspects of each child and strengthen relationships and community connections.

Our team has also implemented a variety of activities that support the Montessori approach based on self-directed activities, hands-on learning and collaborative play and has divided the children into two groups based on their age and capabilities. Each group has different responsibilities including preparing tables, tidying up the classroom and watering plants.

In 2020, we aim to officially implement the Montessori education method and continue to monitor the benefits of the approach as well as facilitate training sessions for our teachers.

Healthcare

It is crucial that all children have access to quality healthcare for the best start to life. We provide our children at the Blue Skies Kindergarten with

nutritional support, supplements as well as health check-ups and specialised screenings that support healthy childhood development.

CNCF doctors examine all children upon enrolment in the Blue Skies Kindergarten. Medical details are recorded for future monitoring and treatments are provided for any existing conditions. A child is referred to a specialist hospital or clinic for further support if a health issue cannot be resolved on site. All children from the kindergarten receive check-ups from doctors who visit our village regularly throughout the year. In 2019, we organised an ear, nose and throat screening; an eye exam; a dental exam; a full physical preventative care examination including a blood test, a urine test and a serology test; two tuberculosis screenings and a ring-worm, hepatitis A and calcium test.

Many of our kindergarten children suffer from malnutrition, stunted growth and rickets as a result of extreme poverty. It is therefore crucial that they receive wholesome and nutritious meals at our Blue Skies Kindergarten. We provide each child with three healthy meals a day and snacks including fresh fruits and vegetables grown in CNCF's Ger Village greenhouses. This year, our children also benefited from four vitamin distributions including a 2-month supply of Vitamin D and a 3-month supply of multivitamins.

Our children are empowered to form healthy habits such as regular morning exercise and personal hygiene skills. Personal care and self-care practices are essential for our young students to develop self-awareness and self-discipline, preparing them for further education.

Summer Holiday Kindergarten Programme

School summer holidays can leave many parents with no other option but to stay at home to take care of their children with no income generated, or to go to work and leave their young ones at home unsupervised. Alternatively, some children have to accompany their parents to work, where they spend long periods of time in dangerous and unstimulating environments.

To support the children's continued growth and to encourage the employment of their parents, the Blue Skies Kindergarten remains open during summer holidays for children in need living at the Ger Village, children of CNCF staff members and those living in the local community, whose parents are unable to provide proper care during the long break. The summer school curriculum consists of fun outdoor and creative activities, storytelling and play, empowering our students to gain a greater social understanding and giving our young people exposure to different experiences.





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PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Primary School Preparation

Three times a week, our Ger Village primary school teacher spends an hour assisting our older kindergarten children in their preparation for primary school entry. The lessons take place in our Ger Village library where the children are enabled to develop their speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy skills in a focused environment.

Events & Activities

Academic Festival

At the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, we organised an academic festival to acknowledge our children's developmental progress and to celebrate our students who graduated from the kindergarten with the attendance of their parents. It was also an opportunity for us to wish the children well who were leaving the kindergarten and transitioning to primary school.

Golden Autumn Trip

Exposure to diverse environments and experiences enables children to have a better understanding of nature and their surroundings. In 2019, we organised a Golden Autumn trip to the nearest birch forest with the participation of 30 young kindergarten children and 4 representatives of parents/guardians. Our children were thrilled to participate in activities such as learning about new fruits and vegetables and collecting fallen leaves and cones which they used to make crafts.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Events & Activities

Parent-Teacher Meetings

Introduction meetings take place in the beginning of the school year in September to welcome all parents and caregivers and to explain programme procedures and guidelines. Quarterly meetings are held between kindergarten teachers and the parents or primary caregivers of the children to discuss their children's progress. Our team also guides the families on how they can support their children's healthy development at home.

We always seek opportunities to include the families in our work, ensuring that they are part of their children's educational, physical and emotional development. Parents or guardians of kindergarten students are encouraged to participate in activities such as supporting their children in class and assisting CNCF in maintenance and horticulture projects. This year, parents of our kindergarten students engaged in a range of volunteer work where they assisted our team in making curtains and children's bed-sheets and setting up our sand play area.

Excursions

Throughout the year, we organise numerous outdoor excursions for our children, stimulating their learning progress and enabling them to develop social skills. This year, our kindergarten students took part in an excursion to a museum, a field trip to learn about the city's transport system and a variety of outdoor picnics.

Hair Cutting Ceremony

Having the first haircut is immensely important in Mongolian culture. The ceremony symbolises the transition to childhood and usually takes place when the child is between the ages of 2 and 5. This year, one kindergarten child participated in the traditional Haircut ceremony. This experience enables the children to gain more knowledge on cultural traditions and beliefs.

New Year's Celebration

New Year's Celebration is one of the most important times of the year for us as our children showcase their progress through a variety of performances. Our kindergarten children also take part in the celebration with singing and dancing performances, developing self-confidence as well as social skills.



PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Events & Activities

International Children's Day Celebrations

In celebration of the International Children's Day, our students enjoyed a fun-filled day of outdoor games, activities and food. The children put on a heartwarming show of songs, poems, and dance routines, leaving everyone extremely proud of what special young people we support.

Maintenance & Improvements

Maintenance work was carried out in the electric room, bathroom and the main hall area. In preparation for the transition to a Montessori kindergarten in September 2020, our kindergarten was also renovated with new furniture and decorated with teaching materials and toys to meet Montessori standards.



REPORT 2019

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Events & Activities

Chinese International School Visit

Each year a group of students from the Chinese International School (CIS), Hong Kong, visit our Ger Village and Kindergarten. The special event is dedicated to promoting friendship and understanding between children from Mongolia and overseas. During their visit, the CIS students play with the kindergarten children and support them in their daily activities.



Singaporean International School Visit

In 2019, we welcomed a visit by Singaporean International School volunteer students. During the visit, the students organised a special event for our kindergarten and Ger Village children. The experience facilitated our children's social and interpersonal skills development and formed a special relationship between our young people and the students, creating lasting memories together.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Life Skills Training

To facilitate our children in forming healthy habits, two trainings on oral hygiene and hand hygiene were organised by our kindergarten teachers and CNCF doctors this year.

A special training week was held for our kindergarten children and 30 parents/guardians. The 5-day training focused on establishing routines for children, health and hygiene practices and the importance of nutritious meals, enabling the parents to have a better understanding of diverse aspects of a child's development and to encourage these practices in their own homes.

Partnerships

Through working to improve our programme delivery and develop the programme capacity to reach more children in need, we aim to strengthen partnerships with the local authorities and the kindergarten community as well as staying up-to-date with the latest policies and procedures of the Mongolian educational system.

The profound impact of the Blue Skies Kindergarten has also inspired positive engagement from the local community, with donation of food supplies and stationery, as well as funding for an outdoor sandpit for our children.



PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Staff Training

In 2019, our kindergarten teachers attended a variety of training sessions delivered by our psychosocial team. The courses were designed to provide knowledge on basic psychology, communication skills, emotional management and risk assessment. This was also an opportunity for the staff to learn from each other and share ideas towards the goal of giving children the highest quality of care and support. Our kindergarten team also attended a variety of external training throughout the year, enabling us to provide the best level of care for our children.

Staff Awards

This year, we were delighted that our staff were recognised for their hard work and outstanding contribution to childcare in the community.

- Assistant teacher Solongotuya was awarded with “Best Youth Worker of the Year” from the Family, Child and Youth Development Department of Ulaanbaatar city
- Teacher Davaasuren was awarded with a “Recognition of Leadership” from the Association of Senior Teachers





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GLOBAL STATISTICS

Having access to high quality early childhood education and healthcare is crucial for a child's survival, health and development. Children from impoverished backgrounds often face many childhood challenges which impact their early psychological and physical development.



- **144 million** (21.3%) children under the age of 5 had stunted growth and **47 million** (6.9%) suffered from wasting (acute malnutrition) of which **14.3 million** were severely wasted ^[1]



- Under-five mortality rate is **16 deaths per 1,000 live births** ^[2]
- Infant mortality rate is **14 deaths per 1,000 live births** ^[3]
- **26%** of children aged 36-59 months do not attend an early childhood education programme ^[4]

OUR YEAR

CNCF recognises the importance of an holistic approach supporting the intellectual, social and emotional development of every child. For many children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds shaped by poverty, neglect and abuse, CNCF's Blue Skies Kindergarten is a safe and positive environment where they are enabled to develop their physical, personal, social and emotional well-being, laying the foundation for essential cognitive aspects of their learning and development.

In 2019



90 CHILDREN

received holistic care and education
at CNCF's Blue Skies Kindergarten



41 GIRLS



49 BOYS

Age Groups

03
Children

2-year-old

13
Children

3-year-old

27
Children

4-year-old

30
Children

5-year-old

17
Children

6-year-old

11 CHILDREN
attended the kindergarten during
summer holidays

67 CHILDREN
enrolled in fall term



28 GIRLS



39 BOYS

05 CHILDREN

from CNCF's Blue Skies Ger Village

Age Groups

03
Children

2-year-old

13
Children

3-year-old

24
Children

4-year-old

26
Children

5-year-old

01
Child

6-year-old

62 CHILDREN
enrolled in spring term

OUR STORIES

Reaching A Brighter Future

*Mungun and her family live in derelict conditions in one of the most vulnerable areas of Ulaanbaatar city. Mungun's mother is an alcoholic and unstable but is the sole carer to Mungun and her siblings. Mungun's mother collects bottles and plastics from the nearest landfill for money to feed her family and often leaves her children alone at home in unsafe and dangerous environments.

When Mungun first came into our care at CNCF's Blue Skies Kindergarten, she lacked social skills and was suffering from severe malnourishment and emotional trauma. Mungun would isolate herself from other children and struggled to communicate. After the initial assessment of her overall health and wellbeing, our teachers immediately developed a rehabilitation plan for Mungun and provided crucial and consistent psychosocial care to support Mungun in her healing process. Within four months, Mungun demonstrated great progress in her social skills and began to play and communicate with our teachers and other children. Mungun's health and wellbeing have also improved. Our healthcare doctors arrange regular check-ups for Mungun and ensure she receives the necessary medications and supplements she requires.

In order to improve the family's living conditions and monthly income, our teachers at the Kindergarten organised four life skill training sessions for Mungun's mother. This engagement allowed us to build trust and rapport with her as well as enabling Mungun's mother to improve her employment opportunities and empower her to strive for other opportunities in life. Over time, she has become more motivated, healthy and has stopped her drinking and is determined to provide a better life for her family.

Thanks to the support provided by CNCF, Mungun has flourished into a healthy child equipped with essential skills and knowledge for her transition to primary school while her family embarks on a brighter future.

*Names and identities changed to protect privacy





REPORT 2019

OUR STORIES

Thank You from a Parent

"My family moved from the countryside to the capital city seeking a better life a few years ago. My husband was unable to secure employment as we are both uneducated. We struggled, ended up living in a trash yard as we could not afford rent anywhere. It was extremely challenging to survive in the big city. As we were migrants, we were unable to send our children to public schools and could barely afford food let alone private schools. The thought of not being able to provide our children with an education which would trap them in this continued cycle of poverty was unbearable.

We lost all hope until we found CNCF. We felt so much joy when my son was enrolled in the Blue Skies Kindergarten. I could not believe that there were quality services for disadvantaged people like us. The Kindergarten provides not only a national preschool curriculum but nutritious meals and a nice and safe environment for my son to grow up in. He often shows us what he has learned in school, which makes us very proud of him. The teachers have taught my son many poems, songs and helped him get educated. Most importantly, they enable my son to develop positive emotional and behavioural skills.

We could not be prouder to see our little boy grow into such a healthy and happy child. Thank you to CNCF for opening doors to education for children like ours and making a difference in our lives."

Identities changed to protect privacy



REPORT 2019

OUR STORIES

Testimonial of a Child

"My younger brother and I are living at the Ger Village and have been going to the Blue Skies Kindergarten for a while now. I remember before coming to live at the Ger Village, we were living in a very unsafe environment and often were freezing cold during the winter months as we had no heating. My brother and I were extremely cold and we wished one day we could stay in a safe place and keep warm.

It is always so warm in the Kindergarten even when the weather outside is freezing and the teachers always welcome us with healthy food and warm drinks. That makes me enjoy going to the Kindergarten very much, especially when I get to meet my friends and know that I am safe.

Every morning I would get myself ready for the day and help my brother do the same, and then we would attend the Kindergarten together. I am really proud of us. At the moment, I am learning to write and count and preparing to become a primary school student soon. I am so happy here and so grateful I am here with my brother. Thank you CNCF for all you have done for us."

Identities changed to protect privacy



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The operational cost of the Blue Skies Kindergarten was:

USD \$40,494

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

Audit in progress at time of reporting.
Our audits can be found at:
www.cncf.org/finance-policies/



BLUE SKIES KINDERGARTEN EXPENDITURES IN 2019

Description	Expenditure 2019
Food and consumables for children	6,237
Stationery and supplies for children	732
Firewood and coal	1,338
Equipment, assets and general purchases	1,115
Utilities (electricity, sewage)	1,711
Repairs and maintenance	461
Staff salaries - 6 staff	24,872
Staff training expenses	380
Social insurance for staff members	2,765
Materials for children's events and birthday parties, bank fees & others	883
TOTAL COST	40,494

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Your donations and support to the Blue Skies Kindergarten enable us to create a safe, caring environment where we provide critical care and educational support that benefits the early childhood development of our young children who come from poverty-stricken and disadvantaged backgrounds.

The CNCF's Blue Skies Kindergarten provides a place for vulnerable children to go to school and receive a quality education that all children deserve. Thank you to the **Mongen School of Ulaanbaatar, Gachuurt LLC** and **Linda Kuczka** for your support and contributions to the Blue Skies Kindergarten.

Without support from our generous donors, we would not be able to provide these life-changing services and significantly increase the children's chances of a thriving future breaking the cycle of poverty for themselves, their family and future generations to come.





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

-  38 Tu Xuong Street, Dist.3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
-  +84 283 932 6484
-  international@cncf.org
-  www.cncf.org
-  @ChristinaNobleChildrensFoundationInt
-  @CNCF_int
-  Christina Noble Children's Foundation

Written by: Bianca Joyce, Huong Hoang

Graphic Design by: Chi Nguyen

Imagery: Elaine Holder & Piers Birtwistle

Info Graphic: flaticon.com