

## [A Better Life - 'Cathy's Daily Diary'](#)

### [Day One](#)

Arrived in Ulaan Baatar and met with Saraa (our translator who always looks after us so well). Straight to the Identification Unit (IU) where the playground, funded by [A Better Life](#), is located. Met with Mugi, the project leader and one of the policemen in the unit. Delighted to see the children playing happily in this bright, safe place. There are swings (which are a big hit!), climbing frames and slides for the children. The team has done an impressive job and have put your donations to great use. The police in the unit and some of the older children helped build the playground and worked into the night to finish it. This helped keep costs down as well as involving many people in the project. They are very proud of what they have done and have ambitious plans to make it an even better place. The policeman described the unit as a prison before the playground was built but now it is a cheerful place where the children can play and enjoy themselves and be kids. The team thanked [A Better Life](#) and everyone who helped make the playground possible.

### [Day Two](#)

Off to the World Vision office to discuss our itinerary for the next four days. It was jam packed and everyone was excited and eager to start. First stop was to be the Day Centre, but in Mongolia, you expect the unexpected and on our way into the city the World Vision nurse Altaa who accompanied us that day asked us if we would be able to help a young boy called Jamsuran. He had been the victim of a hit and run at the weekend. He had suffered head injuries and internal bleeding and needed an operation immediately. Jamsuran's family are very poor and could not afford to pay for the medication he would need after the operation. We agreed to pay for the medication and went to the hospital to meet with Jamsuran's doctor. The hospital was busy and very basic which was quite shocking. We gave \$140 to cover the cost of the medication and she agreed to perform the operation. Afterwards we visited Jamsuran in the ward he shared with six adults, he was obviously in pain and his sister said he didn't recognise his family and had lost his memory. Thanks to [A Better Life](#), Jamsuran now has a chance to make a good recovery.

Afterwards we went to the Day Centre where children whose families are very poor come to have breakfast and showers before going to a nearby school. Both Uka and Boloro, the children we were buying Gers for, attend the day centre. I had met Uka four years ago at the summer camp with Liza and it was lovely to see her again. We met Boloro there too and brought both young girls and their mothers to see the land where their new homes would be built. Boloro and her family were living in a cold rented one roomed house and Uka's family were sleeping in different places week to week. They were so excited about having a home they could call their own. Afterwards we went to the Ger factory to buy Gers. Prices have increased greatly in Mongolia (double for some items) but because of the generous donations we could afford to buy Gers for three families. Fantastic!

### [Day Three](#)

Visited the farm in Suj which has benefited greatly from the proceeds from the "Cash For Cows" fundraiser, at The King Charles Pub 2007. We met with the houseparents Ajgaa and Gendensuren and Boloro, one of the four teenagers with mental disabilities living and working on the farm. Boloro is happy and healthy and is very proud of the work he was doing on the farm. The teenagers learn how to look after the animals and make various products from the cows milk. Sampled some of the products including a very indulgent cream which we ate with local bread. The Mongolian version of scones with clotted cream! Delicious! They also sell the milk products in the city and the profit goes in bank accounts Ajgaa has opened for each teenager. Then had a tour of the farm and saw the solar panel Liza had bought which has been used to provide hot water for the farm... and last but not least the Cows -They are healthy and providing food and money for all involved.

After the farm it was time to visit the first family [A Better Life](#) bought a Ger for last year. This family are still very poor but their lives have improved greatly since giving them a home. Tsogoo is looking for work but finding it hard as employers want a younger person. Her son, a butcher, provides an income for the family. She thanked [A Better Life](#) for helping her make a more comfortable and safe life for her and her family.

### [Day Four](#)

Met with Oyunchimeg about the future. The main project is the farm, buying more cows and greenhouses. Greenhouses will be used to grow vegetables during the short growing season and provide another income for the farm. We then went to visit the second family from last year. They have turned their lives around. The mother is working as a cook and was able to buy the land the Ger is on. She can now provide for her son and father who lives with them. Unfortunately, her son has epilepsy. He has also become difficult to manage and at times violent. She is doing her best to earn money to bring him to a doctor outside Mongolia to see if his illness can be treated. She thanked everyone for providing her with a Ger and enabling her to make a more stable and happy life for her and her family. This truly is a success story and shows that sometimes all someone needs is a little help to give them a second chance.

Made our way to the Black Market with Uka, Boloro, their mothers and Boloro's brother to buy furniture for their new Ger. After much haggling and rapid Mongolian, we had two stoves, beds and blankets. The families were very excited as we left the market and went to their new homes. They were busy yesterday preparing the land and building their Gers. We arrived at Boloro's Ger first and it was fantastic to see it built. Boloro's mother found it difficult to speak about how this would change her life. She was very grateful to have an opportunity to give her children [a better life](#) and promised to make the most of it. We then went to Uka's home.

Uka's mother was very emotional and thanked us for helping her provide a secure and warm home for her and her family. Our third family were made known to us by our translator Saraa. Nyambayar, a family friend, was orphaned at an early age and has struggled to provide for his own family. He and his wife and son and new born daughter (only seven days old!) lived in a small house with sixteen other family members and needed a home of their own. Nyambayar and his wife were thrilled that [A Better Life](#) was able to help them and provide their family with a home.

As you can see, the whole trip was a great success. Declan and I were delighted to be involved with [A Better Life](#) and thank everyone in Ireland and England for their generous donations and interest in the projects in Ulaan Baatar. We think Liza & Leigh should be very proud of themselves. They have worked diligently to make people's lives better and have never forgotten about the street children of Mongolia. It is a wonderful charity and one that has really made a difference to the people of Ulaan Baatar.

Bye for now

Cathy