

# Associated Country Women of the World

ACWW CONNECTS & SUPPORTS WOMEN AND COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE

## Empowering Mongolian women to transform the local diet

Average temperatures over most of Mongolia are below freezing from the beginning of November to the end of March and are at about freezing during April and October. This means that the growing season in Western Mongolia is just three months long, that is, from June to August. As a result, fruit and vegetables are in short supply for 10 months of the year and families must either pay inflated prices for low quality, imported produce, or go without. This situation is causing widespread malnutrition, especially among young children.

In 2014, the Sain Tus Center, a local NGO, that aims to empower disadvantaged women in Western Mongolia, came up with the ideal solution: The construction of large, heated poly-tunnels, to extend the growing season. This would allow two harvests of fruit and vegetables to be obtained between March and October. In order to fund this project, the Sain Tus team applied for a grant of US\$ 4,487.24 from ACWW<sup>1</sup> to pay for the construction of two poly-tunnels, each measuring 20 by 6 metres, with heating and irrigation systems, close to the small town of Jargalant Sum.



The Sain Tus team had already identified two groups of 15 women from female-headed, low income households who were keen to get involved. Each group set about building the poly-tunnels once the funds were received. They formed co-operatives to produce and market the fruits and vegetables. Starter funds were provided for hand tools and seeds. Since this was the first time these women had been able to earn their own incomes, the Sain Tus team gave lessons in financial management, in addition to training in horticulture and basic health care.



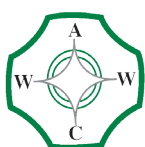
In March 2015, the women planted the first crops in the poly-tunnels. Crops, such as cabbage and onions, were transplanted into the field once the outside temperatures were high enough, while the more tender crops, including cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers were allowed to mature inside the poly-tunnels. Animal manure was used to fertilise the crops.

Yields were high and by the end of the first season, on average, each farmer had profited by as much as **1,124,917 Mongolian Tughriks**, equal to **US\$ 566.87**, once the produce had been sold in the local market. The women also retained produce to feed their families and up to 30% has been preserved in order to help satisfy the high demand for vegetables during the winter months.



ACWW is an international NGO that connects and supports women and communities worldwide. We joined the Zero Hunger Challenge in 2015 and the Mongolian poly-tunnel project is the first Woman-to-Woman project that has been monitored according to 5 essential criteria. ACWW is currently supporting further Zero Hunger Challenge projects, and seeking donors to adopt them. This project was adopted by the Country Women's Council, USA.

You can learn more at [www.acww.org.uk](http://www.acww.org.uk)



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Mary Sumner House  
24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB

Registered Charity no. 290367

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+44 (0)207 7993875  
[www.acww.org.uk](http://www.acww.org.uk)

[info@acww.org.uk](mailto:info@acww.org.uk)  
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