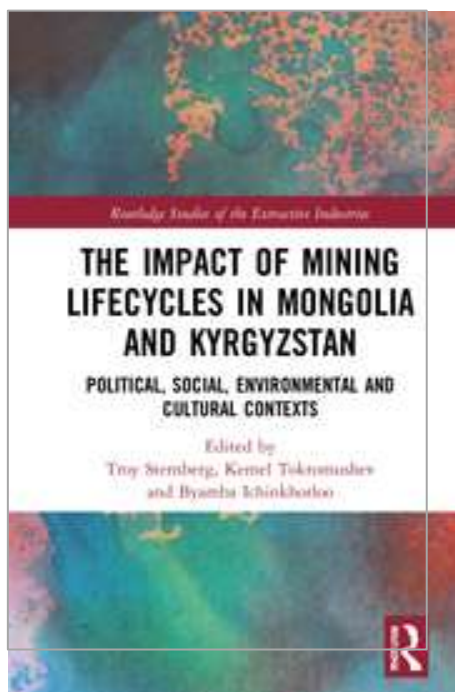


Newsletter
 August 2021

Welcome to the Gobi Framework – Final Newsletter #5, August, 2021

As the Gobi Framework project finishes we are pleased to send out the last Gobi Framework newsletter. We complete the project gratified for the work done, especially during the pandemic, and appreciative of all the people who contributed to its success and the team effort after 3 years. Our country partners, herders, researchers and communities made the project interesting and worthwhile. We hope outcomes including local knowledge exchanges between Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan, new legislation agendas, mining mediation efforts, and community awareness prove lasting and beneficial. Much effort has gone into the mobile phone app and the project's 'Mining Lifecycles' book that will be published in English and Mongolian, and translated for a University of Central Asia 'working paper'. Despite Covid-19, the project delivered ideas, knowledge and experience that we hope will make an important difference for inclusive societies in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan. We thank our partners the University of Central Asia and Independent Research Institute of Mongolia for their leadership, direction and support throughout the project.



After a long delay our conference took place. We welcomed participants to the hybrid event combining in-person and virtual audiences. July 2021

2021 newsletter highlights:

- Project activities 2021 2
- Book summary 3
- Mobile phone app 4
- Country updates 5, 6
- Gobi Framework's greatest hits 7
- Overview and grant awards 8

<https://gobiframework.ouce.ox.ac.uk/>

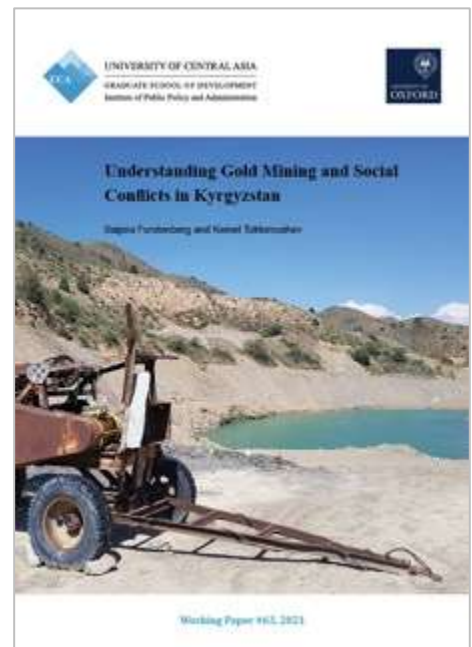
Project activities in 2021



Bayarsaikhan Namsrai (centre) and Ariell Ahearn being interviewed on Mongolian TV about the importance of Social Impact Assessments in mining. Summer, 2021.

This University of Central Asia Working Paper examines the root causes of conflict dynamics related to mining activities in Kyrgyzstan with a focus on Chinese mining operations in the country. Motivated by increased conflict incidents associated with foreign mining operations in Kyrgyzstan, the study is based on observations in the mining sector and draws its analysis from interviews conducted in Chatkal, Ala Buka and Naryn sites in Kyrgyzstan.

<https://ucentralasia.org/Resources/Item/3082/EN>



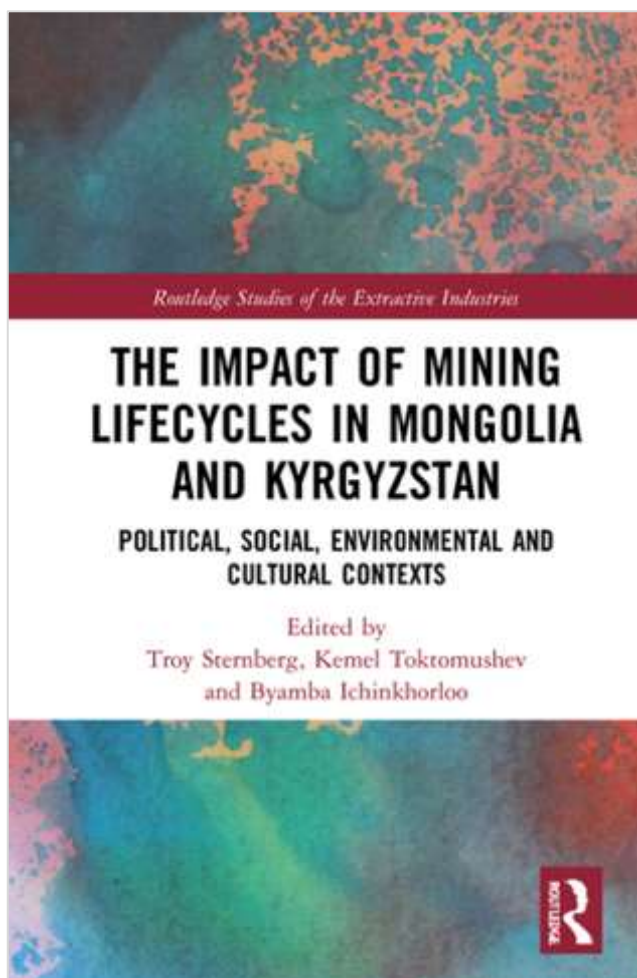
5th Oxford Desert Conference July 1-2, 2021. Our first post-pandemic in-person and virtual event brought together researchers from global drylands. It was an opportunity to present Gobi Framework outcomes and encourage new collaborations. The conference team has inspired and co-organized a Desert Institute planning event in Portugal, September 2021.

A Desert Conference photo, St Cross College, Oxford

Edited volume *'The impact of mining lifecycles in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan'* Routledge 2021

Co-edited by three of the project's core team, we are delighted to announce the publication of a collection of essays by Kyrgyz and Mongolian academics and practitioners on the impact of mining lifecycles in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan. The publisher, Routledge, describe the volume as follows:

The book investigates how mining affects societies and communities in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan. As ex-Soviet states, Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan share history, culture and transitions to democracy. Most importantly, both are mineral-rich countries on China's frontier and epi-centres of resource extraction. This volume examines challenges communities in these countries encounter on the long journey through resource exploration, extraction and mine closure. The book is organised into three related sections which travel from mine licensing and instigation to early anticipation of benefit through the realisation of social and environmental impacts to finite issues such as jobs, monitoring, dispute resolution and reclamation. Most originally, each chapter includes a final section entitled 'Notes from the Field' that presents the voice of in-country researchers and stakeholders. These sections will provide local contextual knowledge on the chapter's theme by practitioners from Mongolia and Central Asia. The volume thereby offers a distinctively grounded perspective on the tensions and benefits of mining in this dynamic region. Using Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan as case studies, the volume reflects on the evolving challenges communities and societies encounter with resource extraction worldwide.



Most importantly, we want to thank all of our Kyrgyz and Mongolian authors who made the book a success: Kemel Toktomushev, Byamba Ichinkhorloo, Khatanbold Oidov; Budsuren Davaanyam, Aisha Karpayeva, Aimeerim Tursalieva, Kuban Ashyrkulov, Ariell Ahearn, Bayarsaikan Namsrai, Battsengel Lkhamdoorov, Baigalmaa Purevsuren, Tegshbayar Darambazar, Purevdulam Lkhagvasuren, Aicholpon Alieva, Tserennadmid Mijiddorj, Tsendsuren Purevsuren, Amarzaya Namsrai, Munkhuu Norovsambuu, Delgermaa Boldbaatar, Altynai Sydykova, Rahat Sabyrbekov, Indra Overland, Batbuyan Batjav, Aktilek Tungatarov, Erdenebuyan Enkhjargal, Saipira Furstenberg, Almaz Tchoroev, Enkhtsetseg Sosorbaram, Stephen Lezak; G. Munkherdene, Nazgul Aksarieva, Jill Shankleman

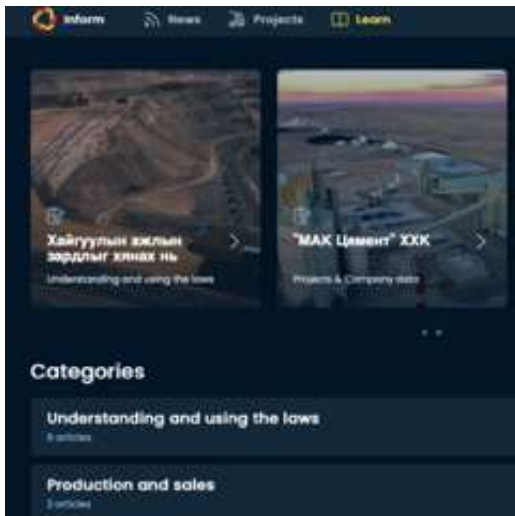
Routledge Publishers; September 2021
ISBN 9780367563394, 280 Pages

To order: <https://www.routledge.com/The-Impact-of-Mining-Lifecycles-in-Mongolia-and-Kyrgyzstan-Political-Social/Sternberg-Toktomushev-Ichinkhorloo/p/book/9780367563394>

Mobile App

The mobile phone app is a key project outcome and one that consumed much time and effort. For our team creating and implementing a phone application was a challenge requiring new skills. From security precautions (Oxford University) and content development (the Mongolian and Kyrgyz research teams) to herder accessibility the app is and remains an ongoing effort. Engineered and designed by by Bluetel (UK), the goal of the phone app is to provide information, knowledge and the ability affect change in local communities impacted by mining. The app will be continued by host organisations Steps without Borders (Mgl) and the University of Central Asia (Kg) after project completion. The domain names are Kender.kg and Mergiinboodii.mn for the two country sites.

Sample app



Kender - In Kyrgyz kender means 'mines'. This captures the essence of the app for rural Kyrgyz communities. The content is first in Kyrgyz with some material available in Russian.

Mergiin boodii - locals and nomads in Mongolia call someone who knows everything, is wise and makes a proper decision in certain situations as mergen boodii – literally, like a little hedgehog. The app will contain contents and knowledge about mining for herders. App testing below



The Gobi Framework for sustainable infrastructure partnerships promotes inclusive economic development and social welfare in the context of Chinese mega infrastructure initiatives in Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Please see the website for more details:

<https://gobiframework.ouce.ox.ac.uk/>

Updates from Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has been a vibrant field site with much social and political activity in the country. Our field research conducted in summer 2019 on mining conflicts proved timely research in 2019 collected data as our field site in Naryn has since seen before protests over key issues (water, jobs, and community benefits) closed our field site in Naryn in 2019. The dispute reflected the relevance and importance of the project themes. An unexpected change of government and new constitution in Kyrgyzstan in 2020-21 added uncertainty as mine nationalization was promised. Through the turmoil and Covid-19 restrictions the team at the University of Central Asia has been productive in writing several Working Papers, policy briefs and contributing book chapters. Animations for the mobile app, legal evaluation of Good Governance standards and virtual participation in online workshops contributed to the project legacy. As UCA continues the project in the years ahead governance, community interaction, legal frameworks and company monitoring will be at the forefront of their work.

Villagers, Naryn Province, after follow-up interviews, July, 2021



Nazgul interviewing a villager, 2019



Kemel Toktomushev, Co-Investigator

“It is exciting how much we have achieved within the framework of this project. Our teams managed to conduct fieldwork in complex environments and produce an impressive number of research outputs. Most importantly we managed to connect to people on the ground. They were excited about our mobile application with animation and knowledge about mining they will get from it. But more importantly, they were touched that we did return to the communities after our initial fieldwork and we stayed true to our promises to make a meaningful impact to the lives of people on the ground – in the areas impacted by mining.”

Pastoralist-to-Pastoralist International Virtual Forum on Covid-19: Pastoralists from Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia & Tanzania

www.waunet.org/iaaes/comm/cnp/blog/ Pastoralists from Asia and Africa led a unique international discussion about their lives, herding and the impact of Covid-19. This event fostered pastoral debate and engagement between Kyrgyz and Mongolian herders and their African counterparts.



Kyrgyz Co-Investigator **Dr Kemel Toktomushev** has been appointed Assistant Professor of Political Science with University of Central Asia's School of Arts and Sciences. He is a Senior Research Fellow with UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration.



Updates from Mongolia

There has been much interest in the project in Mongolia at several levels from the herders in Gurvantes and Dalanjargalan districts to the Cabinet Secretariat and several Government Ministries. Key to the project has been the team of dedicated local researchers who have been essential in planning, conducting research, analysis, writing and communicating with stakeholders. Their role has been essential during Covid-19 travel restrictions. Our forthcoming edited book has been translated into Mongolian, the extensive work on Social Impact Assessment continues to drive political debate, App work is being reviewed and vetted by herders, and plans are in place for continued work inspired by Gobi Framework. The NGO Steps Without Borders, directed by Bayarsaikhan, will lead on future work with (Delgermaa's new NGO name ?).



Social Impact Assessment

A significant impact of the project has been the development of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) guidelines for national policy and legislation in Mongolia: a first in the country's history. Much of this has been driven by Dr Ahearn's Oxford Policy Engagement Network Fellowship Grant stressing SIA development.

Government meeting (left), 17 August 2021, with Cabinet Office, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.

In July, 2021 Ariell Ahearn received permission to enter Mongolia to complete work on the Gobi Framework project. This has enabled project impact implementation and dissemination to key stakeholders including government ministries, foreign embassies, Mongolian academics, local governments and herders. The Oxford team has developed collaborations with local NGOs to advance responsible mining practices and infrastructure development practices. There is growing consensus amongst government stakeholders that more attention is needed to understand social impacts and develop processes to reduce harm to traditional livelihoods such as mobile pastoralism.

Our team has learned much from the phone app development process and our experience will inform the work of other agencies hoping to build apps for herders. Translating our research results into impacts accessible to all has been a rewarding and challenging process and will shape our work for years into the future.



Ariell in Bayanhongor Province, 2021

Mongolian Co-Investigator **Dr Byambabaatar Ichinkhorloo** is now Director of the International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations – Mongolia, under the auspices of UNESCO. He is also a lecturer at the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, National University of Mongolia."

Gobi Framework Greatest Hits



Project launch
Mongolia
September 2018

Project launch,
Kyrgyzstan,
April 2019.



KYRGYZSTAN – President's Office



*UCA Rector
accepting award
from Kyrgyz
Parliament, with
Forum for Open
Government.*



Field sites:
Mongolia above,
Kyrgyz below



Kyrgyz,
Mongolian &
Oxford team
meeting in Issyk-
Kul, Kyrgyzstan.
September 2019.



Mongolian Co-I
Byambabaatar Ichinkhorloo

Ariell on Mongolian TV news, 2019



Kyrgyz Co-I
Kemel Toktomushev



Gobi Framework Overview

The project focused on rural communities through extensive interviews and focus group participation. Between starting in autumn 2018 with in-person interviews and finishing in spring, 2021 with online virtual interviews more than 500 Mongolians and Kyrgyz participated in the research. 190 interviews and 8 focus groups were conducted in Mongolia and 173 interviews and 33 focus groups in Kyrgyzstan

5 TV appearances

5 Media and news interviews

30+ Outreach activities and trainings

A key focus has been developing Social Impact Assessment guidance and direction for Mongolia and internationally. Teams continue to work on this so that impact can continue after the project is completed.

Special accomplishments

Baigalmaa Purevsuren. Social Impact Assessment Course. University of Strathclyde. 2020.

Almaz Tchorev, producer/writer. BBC Kyrgyz Service. 2020. Post-mining land rehabilitation in Ala Buka, Kyrgyzstan.

Partnerships

Steps without Borders (Mongolia)

Roadwork Asia (University of Zurich).

GCRF – Compass (University of Kent).

AGRE - Fostering Adaptive Governance and Resilience in Local Communities of Central Eurasia: from fragmented pasts to connected futures? (University of Durham; University of Kent).

Aga Khan Foundation – Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Grant Awards

Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia: - Mystical Nature: A comparative study of religious-environmental dynamics among Inner Asian, African and North American dryland communities (€ 249,988; 2021 - 2024)

University of Oxford: Designing Covid-19 policies for pastoralist communities in Mongolia. Research & Public Policy Partnership Scheme (£ 3300; 2020 - 2021)

University of Oxford: - Central Asian Network Partnerships. Oxford International Seed Fund (£ 2670; 2020)

Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN) Fellowships, University of Oxford: Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF), (£ 24758; 2019 - 2020)

Upscaling praxis from Central to Southeast Asia. GCRF – University of Oxford. (£11,400; 2021).

Pastoralists and Covid-19 in Africa and Beyond. Cluster of Excellence, University of Bayreuth/DFG. (€106,000; 2021-22).

In review: Comparative research on pastoral societies in post-Covid19 Inner Asian countries: case study of Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan. Japanese Society for Promotion of Science/UKRI.

Ariell Ahearn has been appointed Departmental Lecturer in the School of Geography, University of Oxford. She lectures undergraduates, teaches on the Nature, Society and Environmental Governance MSc and supervises D Phil students. Her research focuses on mobile pastoralism & geographies of mining and she is Chair of the Commission on Nomadic Peoples, IUAES.



Publications

- The Impact of Mining Lifecycles in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan: Political, Social, Environmental and Cultural Contexts** (Routledge Studies of the Extractive Industries and Sustainable Development). Editors: Sternberg T, Toktomushev K, Ichinkhorloo B.
- Монгол ба Киргизстан дахь уул уурхайн амьдралын хэв маягийн үзүүлэх нөлөө (*Mining Lifecycles in Mongolian*).
 - Монголиадагы жана Кыргызстандагы тоо-кен тармагынын жашоо мүнөзүнүн таасири (in Kyrgyz).
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