



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Finding Folklore and Tales beneath the Eternal Blue Sky **Name:** Rosie Frascella

Other Team Members: Anya Wislocki, Melissa de Leon

Program: NYC - Asia Program

Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** Mongolia

Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 02

Project Summary: While turning the pages of the New York Times International section, Mongolia is rarely covered and Chingis Khan is most often the only Mongolian figure mentioned throughout our K-12 education. Most Americans have never been taught about Mongolia's rich Shamanistic traditions, their Buddhist folktales, nor their intense transition from communism to democracy. America's and our lack of knowledge about Mongolia inspired us to travel for two days by plane to explore the land without fences to capture the stories and experiences of Mongolians through video, photography, and audio recordings. For four weeks we traveled through Central and Northern Mongolia by Russian jeeps, vans, Range Rovers, motorcycles, and horses visiting nomadic herders, townspeople, city dwellers, activists, and artists beneath a seemingly eternal blue sky.

Career Impact: * Explored the history of Shamanistic folklore at the American Institute for Mongolian Studies.

* Experienced the nomadic lifestyles and traditions of Darkhad herders in Hovsgol Aimag.

* Gained deeper insights on the tradition of oral storytelling in both urban and rural settings.

* Interacted with teachers and students from remote village school communities and major universities.

* Created relationships with Mongolian activists working to create a harmonious and smooth transition from communism to democracy.

Classroom/Community Impact: Our year will begin with an interdisciplinary curriculum between social studies and English Language Arts that incorporates Mongolian folklore and narratives.

· We will frame a new interdisciplinary unit about Community to be carried out in the Literature and History classrooms. This project-based will last 6-8 weeks. We will act as facilitators, guiding students through several stages of research utilizing folklore content as well as their own families and communities as sources of information.

· Students will be documenting folklore from their own native countries and using the ones we collected as a model.

· We gained a deeper understanding of the living conditions and lifestyles of many of our students from rural parts of the world, such as, Tibet.

· We have many artifacts, pictures, and video of the Mongolian nomadic lifestyle that will help Social Studies teachers in our school to build background knowledge and schema.

· Our exploration of Mongolia's culture, religions, and new democratic society will be incorporated in a presentation to all Humanities teachers through a staff professional development workshop at our school.

Open Response: Like Mongolia's transition to democracy, our mission to bring Mongolia into the minds of Americans is dynamic. Having met a cadre of talented, devoted people during our journey, we learned about this transition first hand. This part of our learning was crucial, and far exceeded our grant's initial vision. Through the relationships and connections we created in Mongolia we hope to continue our work there and inspire others to learn, visit, and connect with the country. We are currently pursuing cooperation ideas that we hope will lead to a wider dissemination beyond our school and into the community:

1) A relationship between a Ulan Baatar based NGO that supports ecological and culturally sustainable herding practices, the World Wildlife Fund and our school as a platform to create more interdisciplinary curriculum.

2) Connecting a local community based organization in New York with a contemporary artist collective to envision an exchange program that would lead to a city wide exposition of Mongolian art and a classroom residency in our school.

Quote: "Nothing could prepare us for the sacred beauty of the landscape and the tremendous strength of Mongolian people."

Photos:



One of many beautiful sunsets



The youth of Mongolia



Mongolian wrestlers competing for first place at Khatgal's Nadaam Festival.



A tradition Mongolian snack



We love Fund for Teachers!



Khatgal Village, Khovsgol Aimag



All roads lead to Khatgal



Herders playing basketball while waiting for dinner to be served.