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## **MONGOLIAN**

**The Mongolian language in education in the People's  
Republic of China**

| Regional dossiers series |

This document was published by the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning with financial support from the Fryske Akademy and the Province of Fryslân.

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ISSN: 1570 – 1239

1<sup>st</sup> edition

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This Regional dossier has been compiled by Badma-Odsar, professor and dean of the College of International Education, Inner Mongolia University (IMU), and Hailia, PhD at the IMU. Unless otherwise stated academic data refer to the 2015/2016 school year. A draft of this Regional dossier has been reviewed by Dr. Sechenbaatar, professor at the IMU.

#### *Acknowledgements*

The authors wish to express their gratitude to Dr. Hans Van de Velde, Ms. Anna Fardau Schukking MA, Dr. Sechenbaatar, Mr. Namjilsurung, Mr. Naimanjin, Ms. Surna and Ms. Sachral, as well to those who provided elements through their publications and to the Mercator Research Centre for having suggested clarifications when needed.

Contact information of the authors of Regional dossiers can be found in the Mercator Database of Experts ([www.mercator-research.eu](http://www.mercator-research.eu)).

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## **Glossary**

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>IMU</b>  | Inner Mongolia University                        |
| <b>IMNU</b> | Inner Mongolia Normal University                 |
| <b>MOE</b>  | Ministry of Education People's Republic of China |
| <b>PRC</b>  | People's Republic of China                       |



## Foreword

**background** Regional and minority languages are languages that differ from the official state language. The Mercator Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning uses the definition for these languages defined by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML):

“Regional and minority languages are languages traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population; they are different from the official language(s) of that state, and they include neither dialects of the official language(s) of the state nor the languages of migrants”. The Mercator Research Centre aims at the acquisition, application and circulation of knowledge about these regional and minority languages in education. An important means to achieve this goal is the Regional dossiers series: documents that provide the most essential features of the education system of regions with a lesser used regional or minority language.

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**aim** The aim of the Regional dossiers series is to provide a concise description of minority languages in education, mainly in Europe but also in other parts of the world. Aspects that are addressed include features of the education system, recent educational policies, main actors, legal arrangements and support structures, as well as quantitative aspects such as the number of schools, teachers, pupils, and financial investments. Because of this fixed structure the dossiers in the series are easy to compare.

**target group** The dossiers serve several purposes and are relevant for policymakers, researchers, teachers, students and journalists who wish to explore developments in minority language schooling in Europe. They can also serve as a first orientation towards further research, or function as a source of ideas for improving educational provisions.

**link with Eurydice** The format of the Regional dossiers follows the format of Eurydice – the information network on education in Europe –

in order to link the regional descriptions with those of national education systems. Eurydice provides information on the administration and structure of national education systems in the member states of the European Union.

**contents**

Every Regional dossier begins with an introduction about the region concerned, followed by six sections that each deal with a specific level of the education system (e.g. primary education). Sections eight and nine cover the main lines of research into education of the concerned minority language, the prospects for the minority language in general and for education in particular. The tenth section gives a summary of statistics. Lists of regulations, publications and useful addresses concerning the minority language, are given at the end of the dossier.

## 1 Introduction

### language

Most scholars regard the Xiongnu nomads, who dominated the Northern Central Plain area in China from 209 BC until 93 AD, as the people who established a Mongolian State. After that, several northern nomads such as the Xianbei (147-234), the Rouran (330-555), the Turkics (555-840) and the Uyghur (744-840) have ruled the plateau. The culture and economy of the Uyghur can be regarded as advanced. Their script, Sogdian, is the basis of the vertical Mongolian script that is used nowadays. The Mongolian language is a member of the Mongolic language group, which belongs to the Altaic language family. Mongolian is the main language of most residents in Mongolia and the Mongolian residents in Inner Mongolia and other parts of China and abroad (e.g. Republic of Buryatia in Russia). In this dossier the focus is mainly on the Mongolian language in education in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (hereafter: Inner Mongolia). The Khalkha dialect, which is a dialect of the Mongolian language, is written with its Cyrillic script in Mongolia. In Inner Mongolia, people write with Hudum, a vertical Mongolian script that is also known as the traditional Mongolian script.

In China, there are three main Mongolian dialect groups: the Oirat dialect, the Inner Mongolian dialect and the Barag-Buryats dialect. The Inner Mongolian dialect is further divided into six dialects: Chahar, Khorchin, Kharchin, Baarin, Ordos and Alshaa. Among these, Chahar is considered as the standard Mongolian pronunciation in China (Qingeltai, 1999).

### population

The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is situated in the northernmost part of China, sharing a common border with Russia and Mongolia (see Figure 1). The capital city is Hohhot. Inner Mongolia was established on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1947; it was the first autonomous region of a minority in China. Its total land area is a massive 1.183 million km<sup>2</sup>. It has a population of 24.7 million people (2010), of which the majority is Han Chinese (79%) and 18% is Mongolian (Sodbileg, 2013). The area is also home to other ethnic groups, such as the Manchu, the Hui, Koreans, the Daur, the Ewenki, the Oroqen and the Tibetans.



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*Figure 1. Map showing the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (indicated in red). From Wikimedia Commons, user: TUBS, 2011.*

The Mongols are one of the 55 ethnic minorities in China. The majority of Mongolian speakers, who use the language on a daily basis, are located in Inner Mongolia. As an official provincial language, Mongolian is mainly spoken in this region. Most of the Mongols in China live in Inner Mongolia. Outside Inner Mongolia there are three Mongolian autonomous prefectures and eight Mongolian autonomous counties (Table 1 & Figure 2). Besides that, a small number of Mongolian people live in other cities and places scattered all over China (Yang, 2004).

*Table 1: The Mongolian autonomous regions and provinces and the autonomous prefectures and counties.*

| <b>Autonomous regions and provinces</b> | <b>Autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties</b>  |
|---|--|
| Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region        |  |
| Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region       | Bayingol Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture<br>Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture<br>Mongolian Autonomous county of Hoboksar |
| Qinghai Province                        | Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture<br>Mongolian Autonomous county of Henan                                      |
| Liaoning Province                       | Harqin Left Wing Mongolian Autonomous County<br>Fuxin Mongolian Autonomous County  |
| Jilin Province                          | Mongolian Autonomous county of Qian Gorlos   |
| Heilongjiang Province                   | Dorbod Mongolian Autonomous County   |
| Hebei Province                          | Weichang Manchu and Mongol Autonomous County   |
| Gansu Province                          | Mongolian Autonomous County of Subei   |

*Note.* Adapted from Chinese National Geography, 2016.

Population statistics have been available since 1949, which was when the People's Republic of China (hereafter: PRC) was established. The latest population census, known as the Sixth National Population Census of the PRC, is from 2010. The total number of Mongolian people in China is 5.98 million (2010) out of a total population of 1.3 billion people (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2010), which is almost 0.5% of the total Chinese population. Around 4.22 million people live in Inner Mongolia. The Mongolian language is the ninth most widely spread minority language in China according to the population census of 2010. The exact number of Mongolian speakers in China is unknown, as there is no data available on the language background and proficiency of Chinese citizens. It is known that the use of Mongolian in Inner Mongolia is declining: more people study and use Chinese, partly due to urbanisation, globalisation and China's rapid economic development (Tumenjargal, 2007).



Figure 2. Map showing the Mongolian autonomous regions and provinces, and the autonomous prefectures and counties. From Wikipedia, user: Derfel 73, 2011.

Table 2 displays the number of inhabitants of the eight different provinces in China with Mongolian prefectures and counties. Beijing, the capital of China, is included in this table as well because many Mongols live in Beijing.

About 5.6 million Mongolian people live in these provinces with Mongolian prefectures and counties or in the city of Beijing. In most of the provinces, the number of Mongolian people is quite large, except for the province of Gansu. Percentage-wise, Mongolians are often a small minority in the provinces and Beijing. Only in the Qinghai and Liaoning province more

than 1% of the population is Mongolian. The vast majority of Mongols lives in Inner Mongolia, where they account for about 17% of the total population (2010).

*Table 2: Population statistics of the provinces in China with Mongolian prefectures and counties, plus the city of Beijing in which many Mongols reside.*

| Provinces      | Total population of the province | Total number of Mongolian people within the province |
|----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Inner Mongolia | 24.706.321                       | 4.226.093  |
| Xinjiang       | 21.813.334                       | 156.280  |
| Qinghai        | 5.626.722                        | 99.815   |
| Liaoning       | 43.746.323                       | 657.869  |
| Jilin          | 27.462.297                       | 145.039  |
| Heilongjiang   | 38.312.224                       | 125.483  |
| Hebei          | 71.854.202                       | 180.849  |
| Gansu          | 25.575.254                       | 10.935   |
| Beijing        | 19.612.000                       | 76.736   |
| total          | 278.708.677                      | 5.679.099  |

*Note.* Adapted from National Bureau of Statistics of the PRC, 2010.

**language status** Chinese is the official language of China. Alongside Chinese, Mongolian is used as an official provincial language of Inner Mongolia.

The Constitution of the PRC and other relevant laws clearly guarantee the legal rights of minority groups to use and develop their own languages. Since its adoption in 1954, the Constitution of the PRC has been the fundamental legal basis for ethnic minority education in China. It established the principle of formation, implementation and a basic goal for ethnic minority language and educational policies. It was revised four times. However, it has always adhered to the guiding principles and implementation goals of ethnic minority educational policies, which are focused on the equality, unity, harmony and common development of all ethnic groups. The constitution, in particular Article 4, grants ethnic minorities the right to freely use and develop their own spoken and written languages as well as to preserve or reform their own ways and customs.

Also important for the protection of minorities in China, was the Third Plenary Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which was held in Beijing in 1978. In this Plenary Session, it was stated that the state protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all Chinese nationalities.

**status of  
language  
education**

The construction of Mongolian schools and promotion of the Mongolian culture were stated for the first time under Article 12 of the Administrative Programme of the government of Inner Mongolia in 1947. Language policy regarding the Mongolian education system is also based on the first constitutional file of The Common Programme of the Chinese People's Consultative Conference, which was issued in 1949. Before 1947, Mongolian people had very limited opportunities when it came to education and personal development. Education was a luxury and only available for aristocrats and rich people who could invite tutors to come to their home. In the early twentieth century, some small-size schools appeared at homes and temples. These schools were regarded as typically Mongolian schools at that time. During this period there were many talented Mongolian scholars, but illiterates still made up most of the population. In Inner Mongolia, about 85% of the people were illiterate at the time of the late 1940s (Heqiyelt, 1997). In the 1940s and 1950s, Horseback Schools were quite popular in Inner Mongolia and formed the basis for Mongolian education. The term 'Horseback Schools' refers to teachers in pastoral areas, riding horses to go to their student's home or to a certain yurt where several students gathered.

However, after the establishment of Inner Mongolia in 1947, and especially since the establishment of the PRC in 1949, education became common and equal to every citizen in China. This meant that Mongolian schools were built, Mongolian books were published and Mongolian media were established. The policy of Giving Priority to the Development of Ethnic Minority Education was determined as the general policy. This policy has four basic elements: first, as the focus of national education,

the development pace of ethnic minority education should be faster than the average developing speed; second, priority is given to the improvement of the ethnic minority school environment and arranging staff, funds and equipment; third, the enrolment of ethnic minority students to all levels of schools is increased; fourth, ethnic minority students enjoy grants from the government (Tana, 2015).

The Mongolian education system flourished from the early 1950s onwards, with a sudden successful period from 1947 until 1965, i.e. before the Cultural Revolution in 1966 (Hada, 2013). From 1976 onwards, after ten years of devastation and deterioration during the revolution, the Mongolian culture and language started to regain its rights and hopes. Schools with Mongolian as a medium of instruction were re-established.

The development of teaching materials was also highly emphasised in Inner Mongolia at that time. In 1961, the Inner Mongolia Publishing House was established and there were four editing offices of Mongolian, Chinese, Science and Politics, which promoted the development of Mongolian textbooks. In the late 1970s and early 1980s many organisations and corporations dealing with the Mongolian language and culture were set up across the country, e.g. the Mongolian Language Committee in Inner Mongolia, the Mongolian Cooperation of Eight Provinces in China, and the Department of Mongolian Terminology, Orthography and Standard Pronunciation.

The Law of the PRC on Regional National Autonomy was promulgated in May 1984. It determined the self-governance right on developing education in ethnic minority autonomous regions. This is mainly reflected in the following three aspects: 1. Ethnic minority autonomous regions determine the education system, the education development plan, the curriculum, the medium of instruction and enrolment, based on state education policies and laws; 2. The law states that local self-government organisations should support and develop school running modes, education fund investment and publication of textbooks used in ethnic minority schools (article 37); 3. The law clearly defines the obligation and responsibility of education in ethnic minority autonomous regions (Article 71).

The Compulsory Education Law of the PRC came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1986. The content, which refers to ethnic minority education, is mainly focused on children's equal rights to compulsory education and the choice of the medium of instruction in schools. Furthermore, the state assists ethnic minority areas to implement compulsory education by providing them with teachers and funds. When the Law was redrafted in 2006, the scope was extended and also become more specific. The added parts mainly cover the following three aspects: first, the law guarantees children and adolescents to receive compulsory education through the allocation of educational resources and financial support; second, counterpart support and cooperation in different regions are promoted; third, college graduates are encouraged to go to ethnic minority areas to teach by increasing teacher's allowances through preferential policies. However, Article 6 of the Compulsory Education Law 1986 stipulated that ethnic minority schools could use an ethnic minority language as the medium of instruction, but the revised version of the Compulsory Education Law from 2006 does not mention the medium of instruction.

Based on the Constitution of the PRC, the Law of the PRC on Regional National Autonomy and the circumstances of China at the time, the Regulations of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region for Mongolian Spoken- and Written-Language Work was regulated in 2004 and ratified on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2005. In Chapter 2 of the Regulations, there are 8 articles which deal with learning and teaching Mongolian. The focus is mainly on the following aspects: to promote bilingual education; to gradually increase Mongolian school fund input; to establish more Mongolian vocational schools; to guarantee the employment rate of Mongolian graduates; to train practical skills in the Mongolian language to farmers and herdsman, and to implement preferential policies.

**education  
system**

The Mongolian education system in China is a complete education system from kindergarten to post-doctoral education. The structure of the Mongolian education system is quite similar but slightly different from the Chinese education system. The

following paragraphs deal with the Chinese education system. China's education system is centralised and unified throughout the country in a 6-3-3-4 year system. The basic principle is free public education for all children. School attendance is compulsory for at least nine years, therefore it is known as the nine-year compulsory education system. Kindergarten takes three years and is optional. Nowadays, if the conditions permit to do so, most Mongolian people send their children to kindergarten at the age of three. Compulsory education includes six years of primary, and three years of junior secondary education, which is also known as junior middle school.

After nine years of compulsory education, students have two options: junior graduates may choose to continue their academic education in senior high school or pursue vocational courses in vocational schools, which usually takes two to four years. In the past century, choosing a vocational school after junior high school was common; most Mongolian junior graduates started their vocational education directly after junior high school. A small percentage continued to attend senior high school and took part in the University Entrance Exam (Sude, 2005). Nowadays, a small percentage of the students goes to a vocational education school after junior high. The largest group goes to senior high school. Before the year 2000, students who graduated from vocational schools were guaranteed to find a suitable job. This was because they were assigned jobs by the government. Nowadays, graduates from vocational schools are having a hard time to enter the job market, since the government stopped allocating jobs to vocational school graduates (Urtnasan, 2017).

All universities in China are open to Mongolian students. The academic system of tertiary education includes bachelor's (4-5 years), master's (3 years), and doctorate (3 years) degrees.

There are two main differences between the Mongolian and the Chinese education system. The first difference is the curriculum: Mongolian schools offer trilingual programmes (Chinese, Mongolian and English) and Chinese schools offer bilingual programmes (Chinese and English). The second difference is that some Chinese universities offer a one-year introductory

course that is available for Mongolian students and which focuses on learning Chinese and English. After completing the introductory course, students will attend classes together with Chinese students. If students choose to do this course, it will take them five years to finish a bachelor's degree.

**private and public**

Most Mongolian schools are public schools. Private schools have played a minor role in the Mongolian education system. However, a number of private schools exist. There are some private pre-schools, vocational schools and colleges. Private pre-schools are often small, and some are not officially registered. All primary schools and secondary Mongolian schools are public schools.

**bilingual education forms**

Characteristic for Mongolian education in China is the 'Mongolian-Chinese Bilingual Education Model', which is used in Inner Mongolia. This model can be divided into two types of bilingual education: the first type is known as 'the first pattern of bilingual education', in which Mongolian is used as a medium of instruction and where Chinese is taught as a subject. The second type is known as 'the second pattern of bilingual education', in which Chinese is used as the medium of instruction and where Mongolian is taught as a subject. In Mongolian prefectures and counties outside of Inner Mongolia, all ethnic minority schools belong to the second educational type. We use the Chinese terminology, but it should be noted that the first and second pattern of bilingual education in China would not be qualified as 'bilingual education' in the international literature on bilingual education. Bilingual education is classically defined as: "instruction in two languages and the use of those two languages as mediums of instruction for any part of or all of the school curriculum" (Anderson & Boyer, 1970, p.12).

Curriculum plans play a major instructional role in teaching activities. An increased amount of Chinese lessons in the first type of Mongolian schools in Inner Mongolia indicates that the importance of Chinese classes in bilingual education has changed. The number of hours spent on Chinese lessons in Mongolian schools has increased rapidly over the years.

The National Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development Programme 2010 - 2020 is a landmark documentary of China's bilingual educational development since it established the direction, orientation and main goal of the development of Chinese bilingual education. It also promotes trilingual teaching of Mongolian, Chinese and English in Mongolian schools and stipulates the score of the University Entrance Exam. Besides that, the policy of Fifteen-Year Free Education for ethnic minority students, which includes pre-school education, compulsory education and senior secondary school education, has been implemented.

**administration** Secondary education and education at lower levels are administered by the local people's governments under the guidance of the State Council, the government of the autonomous regions and municipalities. Higher education is administered by the State Council.

The Ministry of Education (hereafter: MOE), the educational agency of the State Council, is ultimately responsible for educational policy but receives advice and guidance from the Department of Education (provincial level), the Bureau of Education and other relevant agencies (county level).

Educational provisions at local level are determined by the provincial, league/city and county level. Although funded mainly by a central government block grant, the local authority determines the configuration and level of local provisions and is responsible for implementing national policies and guidelines within its area. Recruitment of teachers, provisions of buildings and resources, and in-service teacher training are some of the responsibilities of the local authorities.

The administrative organisations of education of the MOE monitor the educational system to ensure proper functioning. Schools and educational institutions assess teachers on their attitude, performance, professional level and political beliefs. The administrative department of education guides and supervises these assessments. The State Council monitors quality and content of the educational programmes and the teacher trainings.

**inspection**

The State Council and local authorities have the overall responsibility for school inspections. All levels have their own inspection services for educational matters. The Education Department and the Bureau of Education consist of civil servants who check if the education system is in line with the requirements determined by each autonomous government.

Schools or other educational institutions assess their teachers on political awareness and ideologies, professional qualifications, attitudes towards work and their performances. The inspector has a pedagogical background and has gone through special courses in order to evaluate the expertise of teachers in different subjects. The inspector visits the school once or twice a year. During the visit, the inspector participates in lessons and interviews the head of the school and teachers. After the visit, the inspector writes a report about the school. This report deals with the learning atmosphere at school and the knowledge and skills of pupils and teachers.

**support  
structure**

At the highest level, the MOE regulates the educational system in China. The ministry certifies teachers, determines standards for the curricula and textbooks, and monitors the educational system in the country. Together with the provincial Department of Education and the Bureau of Education, the MOE has the right to implement language and education policies.

The Ethnic Affairs Commission is responsible for the coordination between the central government and the ethnic minorities in China. Their 'Office of Policies and Regulations' formulates policies and regulations, based on research concerning nationalities, religion and ethnic minority languages in China. The 'Office of Spoken and Written Languages of Ethnic Minorities' falls within the scope of the Ethnic Affairs Commission as well. The office implements policies and regulations that have been determined by the state and the autonomous region that concerns the minority language. It functions as an advisory body as well. The office gives advice to the state on minority language policies.

At the provincial level, the Department of Education coordinates bilingual education in Inner Mongolia. The Ethnic Minority

Education Office, which is part of the provincial Department of Education, coordinates and guides ethnic minority education in the region. Besides that, the department is in charge of the development of suitable teaching materials.

On the county level, the Bureau of Education is responsible for ethnic minority education in Inner Mongolia. Their 'Ethnic Minority Education section' is responsible for the standardisation of spoken and written Mongolian. They guide and evaluate education in the minority language in Inner Mongolia. The Bureau of Education provides teacher support as well.

## 2 Pre-school education

### target group

Pre-school education is meant for children between the ages of three and six. Kindergarten generally takes three years, including a bottom class, a middle class and a top class. Attendance in kindergarten is not compulsory. The top class of kindergarten is also called pre-primary class; it prepares children to continue their studies in Mongolian primary schools. Living conditions determine if people are able to send their children to kindergartens. On the countryside, households are scattered across the grasslands. Shepherds need to move their yurt several times a year for their livestock. Therefore, there are almost no kindergartens in pastoral areas. In regions where there is some agriculture, some small-sized private kindergartens are located. People who live in urban areas usually send their children to kindergartens. With a growing living standard, an increasing number of parents from the countryside can afford to move to urban areas for a temporary stay of three years, in order to let their children attend a public kindergarten.

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### structure

Public Mongolian kindergartens are founded and run by the state. They are free of tuition. In contrast to free public education, private pre-school education has to be paid for by parents, and the rates vary greatly. The educational aim of kindergarten is to develop the child's personality and individual skills.

The percentage of children attending a Mongolian kindergarten is fairly low in comparison with the percentage of Mongolian-speaking children. Mongolian kindergartens are few in number and centralised in cities or towns. This is also a reason for quite many parents to send their children to a Chinese kindergarten. In general, the content of the curriculum of Mongolian kindergartens can be divided into six courses:

- (1) *The Mongolian life and culture course* is focused on gaining knowledge of Mongolian food, costumes, houses (a yurt) and traditional means of transportation (horse, coach, etc.). The purpose of this course is to increase Mongolian kids'

- understanding and passion towards the traditional Mongolian lifestyle.
- (2) *The Mongolian etiquette and culture course* consists of presenting Hada, which is a piece of white or blue fabric used for etiquette. Besides that, children are educated about other traditions like greeting by a snuff bottle, ways of bowing, etc. The purpose of this class is to let children inherit and carry forward fine Mongolian traditions and morals.
  - (3) *The Mongolian literature and art course* educates children about Mongolian myths, stories, folk literature, music and dance. The Mongolian literature and art course has a multi-aspect educational function. It is considered to be one of the most valuable curriculum resources.
  - (4) The Mongolian craft and culture course lets children have preliminary understanding of the artistic style and characteristics of Mongolian folk handicrafts, and grasps the beauty of folk art.
  - (5) *The Mongolian belief and culture course* works on understanding the Mongolian beliefs and culture and helps children to love and to be proud of their ethnicity.
  - (6) *The Mongolian festival course* educates children about Mongolian festivals such as the Spring Festival, the Aobao sacrifice festival and the Nadam Fair festival (Hairhan, 2013). Nadam Fair is a typical Mongolian festival. 'Nadam' means 'entertainment' or 'play' in Mongolian. Nadam Fair originates from the 13th century. The festival is celebrated with wrestling, archery and horseracing competitions. In the early days, winners were given horses, camels, sheep, or tea. Nowadays, mostly cash.

### legislation

Pre-school education is considered an educational stage designed to contribute to the physical, emotional, social, artistic and intellectual development of pupils. The latest guidelines regarding the contents of the curriculum for pre-schools can be found in the Instruction Summary for Guidance of Kindergarten Education, set up in July 2001. Requirements for kindergarten

teachers are mentioned in the Guidance of Kindergarten Education in 2001 promulgated by the MOE.

The local people's governments establish kindergartens at various levels according to the Regulations on the Management of Kindergartens, and encourage and support enterprise and business entities, social groups, residents' committees and citizens to run or subsidise kindergartens.

The development goals of pre-school education are stated in the National Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development Programme 2010-2020. Importantly, this programme also issued free fifteen-year education for ethnic minority students, including pre-primary education free of tuition. At the same time, 0-3 year education is also emphasised in the Programme.

Educational administrative departments at all levels are responsible for supervising, evaluating and guiding kindergarten education. They also organise kindergarten teacher training and kindergarten teacher qualification examinations, they assist the kindergarten healthcare work (Management of Healthcare in Kindergartens [Department of Health.MOE.No.7]), and jointly construct the administrative departments to develop standard facilities for kindergartens (Chapter 22 of the Regulations on the Management of Kindergartens, 1989). Safety issues, as well as the physical and mental health of pre-primary students, are addressed in the Law of the PRC on the Protection of Minors of 1991.

**language use**

In nearly all Mongolian pre-schools, the main medium of instruction is Mongolian. Outside of the school activities, the use of Mongolian is also quite prevalent. This is because Mongolian is the home language for many of the pupils. However, especially in urban areas, some pupils understand Mandarin better than they understand Mongolian before going to a Mongolian kindergarten. Chinese is not taught as a subject in the pre-school stage. In certain Mongolian kindergartens or in certain classes, the teacher uses both Mongolian and Chinese during class. This is because some children are poorly skilled in Mongolian (Zhao, 2013).

**teaching materials**

Teaching and learning materials for the pre-school sector are produced at school, local and national level, and need to be in accordance with the Guide to the Study and Development of 3-6-Year-Old, which was officially promulgated by the MOE in 2012. The teachers mainly prepare instruction materials in Mongolian themselves, but some associations or private organisations develop and distribute educational materials as well.

Backbone teachers of the Hohhot Mongolian Kindergarten edited *Pre-school Teaching Materials for Mongolian Kids* in 1998. Backbone teachers are teachers who are “leaders in the profession” and they are supported to be leaders from the start of their careers (Gillespie, 2019). The materials they developed, are mainly based on Mongolian people’s daily life. Later, a multimedia version of this course was developed and distributed to Mongolian kindergartens in other cities and towns as well.

**statistics**

Because private kindergartens are usually small and sometimes not officially registered, the statistics can be somewhat distorted. Table 3 displays the type and number of Mongolian kindergartens, the number of students, the total number of staff and the number of ethnic Mongolian teachers in the years 2015 and 2016. The data are split up for schools which teach Mongolian as a subject and schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction.

In recent years, the Chinese government started attaching more importance to ethnic basic education. As a result, the number of Mongolian language kindergartens increased by almost 25% (from 316 to 389). Of the 46 kindergartens which teach Mongolian as a subject, 19 changed to schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction. Those are mainly small schools based in the countryside.

An increase in the number of Mongolian kindergartens in Inner Mongolia has also led to an increase in the number of teachers. However, the number of students in schools

which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction does not particularly increase.

It has to be noted that there is an important difference between kindergartens which teach Mongolian as a subject and kindergartens which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction. Kindergartens which teach Mongolian as a subject are mainly very big groups in the urban centres. Kindergartens which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction, are often small kindergartens located in the countryside.

*Table 3: Statistics on the type and number of Mongolian kindergartens in Inner Mongolia. Showing the number of students, staff and ethnic Mongolian teachers in the school years 2015/2016.*

| Types                               | 2015                   |  | 2016                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|                                     | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of kindergartens             | 46                     | 316                                    | 27                     | 389                                    |
| Number of students                  | 100.423                | 51.793                                 | 102.584                | 53.579                                 |
| Total number of staff               | 8.333                  | 5.746                                  | 8.461                  | 6.454                                  |
| Number of ethnic Mongolian teachers | 5.922                  | 3.894                                  | 6.198                  | 4.209                                  |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017a.

### 3 Primary education

**target group** Primary education usually starts at the age of six. Sometimes this is not possible due to economical or geographical conditions in remote areas. Therefore, some children enter primary school at the age of seven. Primary education lasts six years.

**structure** At provincial level, the local government runs all Mongolian primary schools. Based on the Compulsory Education Law, children have to attend six years of primary education. The local government tries to establish primary schools and junior secondary schools at such locations that children and adolescents can attend schools near their homes, as stated in Chapter 9 of the Law of Compulsory Education. Students from pastoral and rural areas are often accommodated in towns or cities to receive primary education. If possible, families from the countryside move to these towns or cities to accompany their kids. If they cannot, they send their kids to school dormitories.

Primary school education allows pupils to make use of and develop their cognitive as well as sensory skills in manual, physical and artistic activities. Subjects that are included in the Mongolian primary school curriculum are: morality and life, morality and society, mathematics, Mongolian, Chinese, English, physical education, music, art (drawing), science, activity (life and labour), and a minority & culture course. This is according to the Inner Mongolian Compulsory Education Curriculum Plan. Students start to learn Chinese in the second year and English in the third year of primary education.

**legislation** In the autumn of 1993, primary schools began to implement the Curriculum Plans for Full-time Primary and Secondary Schools. The curriculum describes the subjects that should be taught, and it provides schools with a syllabus. In the new curriculum reform in 1999, a three-level curriculum management system was put forward, which includes the national curriculum, the local curriculum and the school curriculum. The local curriculum is developed and designed by local education authorities in the light of local realities and needs but in

accordance with the national curriculum policy and curriculum standard.

Promoting the balanced development of compulsory education in ethnic minority areas is emphasised as the strategic task of the state in the National Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development Programme 2010-2020. References for the curriculum content, structure and regulations regarding Mongolian primary education can be found in the Decision of the State Council on Reform and Development of Elementary Education and Outline of National Basic Education Reform. Safety issues, as well as the physical and mental health of pupils, are addressed in the Law of the PRC on the Protection of Minors.

**language use**

In the first type of Mongolian primary schools, Mongolian is used as a medium of instruction. In the second type of Mongolian primary schools, Mongolian is taught as a subject and Chinese is used as a medium of instruction. In the second type of Mongolian schools, Mongolian is not a compulsory subject and is taught for two hours a week. Therefore, the quality of those classes is often rather low and results are regarded as not important. In the first type of Mongolian schools, the choice of the medium of instruction in English language classes is a topic of debate. In English language classes, teachers can use Mongolian, Chinese or both languages as a medium of instruction, depending on their own preferences. For a study of the influence of the language of instruction on Mongolian students' third language acquisition, see Baatar (2014).

**teaching materials**

Textbooks of national subjects are translated versions of Chinese primary school textbooks, which have been edited by the People's Education Press. The People's Education Press is a press that falls directly under the control of the MOE. It mainly engages in research, writing and the compilation, publication and distribution of textbooks for primary and secondary education. Besides that, it publishes additional teaching materials and educational books.

The People's Education Press edits and publishes textbooks and teaching materials for subjects such as morality and life, morality and society, mathematics, English, music, art (drawing) and science and activity (life and labour). Chinese books are usually edited and translated into Mongolian by the Inner Mongolia Education Press. Besides teaching materials, it publishes many extracurricular books for primary school students.

Local curriculum textbooks include Mongolian, physical education, music and art (drawing). The content of Physical Education classes covers national common content and Mongolian physical educational content, such as wrestling and archery. In music class, attention is paid to throat singing and long song teaching. The textbooks for local curriculums are mostly edited and published by the Inner Mongolia Publishing House. School curriculums differ from school to school.

**statistics**

Table 4 displays the type and number of Mongolian primary schools, the number of students, the total number of staff and the number of ethnic Mongolian teachers in the years 2015 and 2016. The data are split up for schools which teach Mongolian as a subject and schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction.

Most striking here is the difference in the size of primary schools which teach Mongolian as a subject and the schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction. This is due to the difference between urban areas and the countryside; primary schools which teach Mongolian as a subject are mainly big primary schools in urban centres. Primary schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction, are often small schools located in the countryside.

The implementation of the new policy, which results in an increase of the schools with Mongolian as the medium of instruction, is not visible here, but probably not yet implemented for primary education.

*Table 4: Statistics on the type and number of Mongolian primary schools in Inner Mongolia. Showing the number of students, staff and ethnic Mongolian teachers in the school years 2015/2016.*

| Types                               | 2015                   |  | 2016                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|                                     | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of primary schools           | 30                     | 285                                    | 29                     | 270                                    |
| Number of students                  | 254.304                | 123.996                                | 268.895                | 122.895                                |
| Total number of staff               | 17.938                 | 16.912                                 | 18.195                 | 16.323                                 |
| Number of ethnic Mongolian teachers | 15.997                 | 14.488                                 | 15.079                 | 14.511                                 |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017b.

## 4 Secondary education

### target group

Junior secondary school is compulsory and takes three years to complete. Students are usually between twelve and fifteen years old when they attend junior secondary school. At the end of the course, all junior graduates are required to take the Senior Secondary School Entrance Examination. After that, they can choose whether to continue academic education in a senior secondary school or if they want to switch to a vocational education school.

Senior secondary education is not compulsory. This type of education takes three years to complete. Students are usually between fifteen and eighteen years old when they study at a senior secondary school. In the final year of senior secondary education, students need to take the University Entrance Exam. A student's score determines which university they can apply for. The higher the score, the more likely it is that a student will be enrolled in a prestigious university and for popular majors.

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### structure

Just like primary education, secondary education is administered by the local government. Students who live in rural areas are often accommodated into towns or cities under the arrangement of their parents to be able to attend secondary school. Especially senior secondary schools are only available in larger communities. Nearly all Mongolian secondary schools are boarding schools.

The subjects taught in junior secondary schools can be divided over three curricula: a national, a local and a school curriculum. National and local curriculums provide for fundamental subjects such as Mongolian, Chinese, English, mathematics, physics, politics, chemistry, biology, geography, music, physical education and arts. School curriculums in Mongolian junior high schools include wrestling, archery, Mongolian chess and Mongolian folk song and dance. However, these cultural subjects vary from school to school. In Mongolian junior secondary schools, 75% of the curriculum consists of obligatory subjects, 15% of optional subjects, and another 10% of cultural

subjects. Only obligatory subjects are examined in the Senior High Entrance Exam.

The total result of the Senior High Entrance Exam for Mongolian students consists of the result of the written examination, the result of the physical education test and a policy additional score. As a minority, Mongolian students have a policy additional score to certain exams, which means they are allowed to add an extra 30 points to their score of the Senior High Entrance Examination. For Mongolian senior high graduates, the policy additional score for the University Entrance Examination is 10 points.

Subjects taught in senior secondary schools are slightly different from the ones taught at junior secondary schools. Courses can be divided into two categories: the Integrated Art courses and the Integrated Science courses. In their first year of senior secondary school, students need to take the subjects Mongolian, Chinese, English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography and history. At the beginning of their second year, they are divided into the Integrated Art track and the Integrated Science track. Students choose one of the two tracks based on their own preferences. However, all students continue to study mathematics, Mongolian, Chinese and English. The main difference is that students who choose the Integrated Art track study geography, history and politics, while students who choose the Integrated Science track study chemistry, physics and biology.

Interesting to note is that eight of the first type of Mongolian senior secondary schools, which use 'The first pattern of bilingual education', offer special classes called 'experimental classes.' Admission to these classes is strict and based on the student's academic performances. Junior graduates need top scores to be admitted to such classes. The schools have adopted an elimination system based on the student's academic performances each semester. Mongolian is used as the medium of instruction in these experimental classes. Students who attend the classes are examined in English as a separate subject. Chinese and Mongolian are examined as one subject in the University Entrance Examination.

**legislation** As with primary education, secondary education falls under the Compulsory Education Law. The obligations, rights and duties of the school, teacher and student are described in the Education Law and the Teacher's Law.

The developmental goals, teaching syllabus and framework of secondary education are stated in the National Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development Programme 2010-2020. Importantly, it also issued free fifteen-year education for ethnic minority students which includes tuition-free senior secondary education. Since 2010, Mongolian pre-primary, primary and secondary schools have been included in fifteen-year tuition-free education.

**language use** Just as for Mongolian primary schools, the first type of Mongolian schools use Mongolian as a medium of instruction, while schools of the second type use Chinese as a medium of instruction.

**teaching materials** In Mongolian secondary schools, textbooks of core subjects of the national curriculum, except for Mongolian, are translated versions of Chinese textbooks compiled and published by the People's Education Press.

Textbooks for Mongolian and cultural subjects, which are part of local and school curriculums, are edited and published by the Inner Mongolia Educational Press. Related teaching and reading materials are usually published by the Inner Mongolia Education Press, the Inner Mongolia People's Publishing House, the Inner Mongolia Culture Press or the Liaoning Nationality Publishing House.

**statistics** Table 5 displays the type and number of Mongolian secondary schools, the number of students, the total number of staff and the number of ethnic Mongolian teachers in the years 2015 and 2016. The data are split up for secondary schools which teach Mongolian as a subject and secondary schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction.

Again, the numbers show a big difference between the number of secondary schools which teach Mongolian as a subject and

schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction. This is due to the difference between urban areas and the countryside; secondary schools which teach Mongolian as a subject are big secondary schools in urban centres. Primary schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction, are often small schools located in the countryside.

The numbers do also show, that there are less Mongolian secondary schools than kindergartens and primary schools. Also, the number of pupils decreases. This is due to the fact that students, at this stage, choose to go to Chinese secondary schools instead of schools which teach Mongolian as a subject or use it as the medium of instruction.

The implementation of the new policy, which results in an increase of the schools with Mongolian as the medium of instruction, is not visible here, but probably not yet implemented for secondary education.

*Table 5: Statistics on the type and number of Mongolian secondary schools in Inner Mongolia. Showing the number of students, staff and ethnic Mongolian teachers in the school years 2015/2016.*

| Types   | 2015                   |  | 2016                   |  |
|---|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|   | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of junior and senior high schools              | 17                     | 110                                    | 14                     | 109                                    |
| Number of students in junior and senior high schools  | 121.860                | 52.877                                 | 121.355                | 52.059                                 |
| Total number of staff (junior & senior)               | 27.896                 | 8.122                                  | 28.402                 | 8.021                                  |
| Number of ethnic Mongolian teachers (junior & senior) | 19.976                 | 5.865                                  | 20.807                 | 5.793                                  |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017c.

## 5 Vocational education

**target group** In China, there are two types of vocational schools: secondary vocational schools and advanced vocational schools. The goal of vocational education is to train a large number of skilled personnel.

Secondary vocational education is one of the possibilities for students after completing junior secondary education at the age of 15-16. It can be an alternative to senior secondary education. Students can study for a professional certificate over a period of two or three years, which prepares them for the labour market. Advanced vocational education is accessible to students after completing senior secondary education. This usually takes three or four years.

**structure** Vocational education in Inner Mongolia has distinctive national and local characteristics. Most teachers are ethnic Mongolian teachers (cf. Table 6). Special characteristics of Inner Mongolian vocational schools are subjects such as Mongolian Studies, History of Ethnic Minorities, Ethnology, Mongolian Medicine, Prairie Culture and Ethnic Minority Education.

All vocational schools have launched the course “Ethnic Theory and Policy”, which helps students to understand the Chinese culture.

Students at vocational schools usually have to do an internship for six up to twelve months. The objective of the internship is to gain experience on the labour market, which can make it easier to find a job after graduation. The certificate of secondary vocational school graduates is equivalent to a senior secondary graduate certificate.

**language use** In Inner Mongolian vocational schools, the medium of instruction is in general Mongolian, although most textbooks are in Chinese. Because of that, code-switching occurs very frequently. In view of the fact that Chinese is the dominant language, informal interaction among students and teaching staff is predominantly in Mongolian-Chinese code-switching (Yi, 2015).

**legislation**

The Vocational Education Law of the PRC, regulating vocational education and training, came into force in 1996. It aims at a better integration of educational provisions and demands of society, the labour market and individuals. The state encourages the local government, enterprises, institutions, public organisations and individuals to establish vocational schools in accordance with the law.

Speeding up the development of ethnic minority vocational education and attaching importance to employment are both key points which have been mentioned in the National Medium and Long Term Programme for Educational Reform and Development 2010-2020 and the Regulations of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region for Mongolian Spoken and Written Language Work 2005.

The development strategy of the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road was put forward in 2013. Inner Mongolia was mentioned as a core area in the development strategy. This also brought development opportunities for vocational education in Inner Mongolia. The One Belt and One Road Initiative provides a platform for communication and cooperation between vocational schools in China and abroad. Furthermore, it creates job opportunities for Mongolian vocational school graduates.

**teaching materials**

Teaching materials for vocational education are diverse in content. Most textbooks are in Chinese. In some Mongolian-oriented majors, Mongolian translations of Chinese textbooks are used. Only in some Mongolian Medical Schools and vocational Teacher's Colleges, teaching materials are in Mongolian. These books are published by the Inner Mongolia Educational Press.

**statistics**

Table 6 displays the type and number of Mongolian vocational schools, the number of students, the total number of staff and the number of ethnic Mongolian teachers in the years 2015 and 2016. The data are split up for vocational schools which teach Mongolian as a subject and vocational schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction.

The table shows there are relatively few Mongolian vocational schools in Inner Mongolia. This is because fewer students are willing to go to vocational schools because the Chinese job market requires higher qualifications.

Again, the numbers show a big difference between the number of vocational schools which teach Mongolian as a subject and the schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction. This is due to the fact that vocational schools which teach Mongolian as a subject are big vocational schools in urban centres. Vocational schools which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction, are often small schools located in the countryside.

The implementation of the new policy, which results in an increase of the schools with Mongolian as the medium of instruction, is not visible here, but probably not yet implemented for vocational education.

*Table 6: Statistics on the type and number of Mongolian vocational schools in Inner Mongolia. Showing the number of students, staff and ethnic Mongolian teachers in the school years 2015/2016.*

| Types                               | 2015                   |  | 2016                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|                                     | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of vocational schools        | 2                      | 20                                     | 2                      | 19                                     |
| Number of students                  | 16.112                 | 10.196                                 | 9.428                  | 9.304                                  |
| Total number of staff               | 1.953                  | 908                                    | 1.884                  | 907                                    |
| Number of ethnic Mongolian teachers | 1.650                  | 576                                    | 1.626                  | 610                                    |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017d.

## 6 Higher education

### structure

The academic system of tertiary education in China consists of a bachelor's (4-5 years), master's (3 years), and doctoral (3 years) degree.

Fifteen universities in Inner Mongolia offer Chinese-Mongolian bilingual bachelor programmes. Eight of these universities have bilingual master degree programmes, five of them doctoral degree programmes, and three of them offer post-doctoral positions. The Department of Mongolian Studies at the Inner Mongolia University (hereafter: IMU) (1957) is a department that consists of several institutes: the Mongolian Language and Literature Institute, the Mongolian Language Research Institute, the Mongolian History Research Institute and the Research Institute of Contemporary Inner Mongolia and Neighbouring Countries.

Besides the IMU, some prestigious universities in Inner Mongolia have significantly contributed to the Mongolian language and culture. Examples are the Inner Mongolia Normal University (hereafter: IMNU) (1952), the Agricultural University of Inner Mongolia (1952), the Inner Mongolia University of Science and Technology (1956), the Inner Mongolia Medical University (1956), the Inner Mongolia University of Finance and Economics (1960), and the Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities (1958). At the universities mentioned above, students can study the Mongolian language and culture as a major, or students with other majors can opt for Mongolian as the medium of instruction. Outside Inner Mongolia, there are two universities which have a department of Mongolian Studies in China, namely the Minzu University of China and the Northwest University for Nationalities.

In some universities in China, there is a one-year introductory course available for ethnic minority students, which focuses on learning Chinese and English. After one year, minority graduates will attend classes together with Chinese students. However, if Mongolian students go to universities that use Mongolian as a medium of instruction, they do not need to take a one-year preliminary course.

In the past, most Mongolian students started looking for a job directly after they received their bachelor's degree. A small percentage continued their education. Nowadays, an increasing number of Mongolian students continue with a master's or doctoral degree due to fierce competition in the job market and the importance given to knowledge and degrees.

Mongolian students have the policy additional score in the master's entrance exam and career entrance exam, based on the 'Ethnic Minority Preferential Policy'. On the one hand, a positive result of this policy is the significant growth of the number of ethnic minority students in universities. On the other hand, there are also some unpredicted negative consequences: some students belonging to an ethnic minority rely too much on this policy and therefore tend to bother less about their studies. The common impression is that graduates belonging to an ethnic minority attain a lower level than other graduates do. This can have an unfavourable impact on minority students when looking for a job after graduation (Goihan, 2011).

Universities in Inner Mongolia also attract foreign students; the number has grown rapidly in recent years. Most of the time, their objectives are to study the Mongolian language, history, literature and culture. Alternatively, they want to study Chinese.

**legislation**

The State Council uniformly leads and administers higher education nationwide. Governments of the autonomous regions, provinces and municipalities coordinate and manage higher education in their administrative region. Aims and functions of higher education are regulated by the Higher Education Law of the PRC. The law also deals with the university in relation to minority languages and ensures that universities should encourage scientific research and cultural and training activities to promote minority languages. So far, all initiatives have been funded by the state or the region.

The relevant laws about the rights and responsibilities of the school, teachers and students are summarised in the Education Law and Teacher's Law.

**language use** Universities in Inner Mongolia offer bilingual education, with courses in Chinese and Mongolian. In the Departments of Mongolian Studies, students study Mongolian as their main degree. Classes with Mongolian as the medium of instruction are included in the curriculums of all other departments as well. Informational documents, scientific publications and journals compiled and published by the universities in Inner Mongolia are bilingual as well.

**teacher training** The state supports bilingual teacher training, research courses for teachers, and the development and compilation of teaching materials. In China, the Teacher's Qualification Certificate is a permit for a teaching position. Graduates of normal universities, i.e. institutions that used to focus on the training of schoolteachers, receive the certificate if they pass the examinations about education, psychology and Mandarin besides their own majors. The State Council published the Regulations on Teachers Qualifications on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1995. Accordingly, the standards for recruiting teachers are strictly regulated; teachers must have the required certificates before they can start working as a teacher.

There is only one comprehensive normal university in Inner Mongolia, namely the IMNU. For bilingual teachers, the medium of instruction at the university is Mongolian. However, Mongolian students are required to reach level two of Mandarin with a grade B or above at the Mandarin Proficiency Test Certificate before graduation.

If graduates from normal universities outside Inner Mongolia want to be a teacher at a Mongolian school, they need to pass the Teacher's Qualification Examination and the Teacher's Recruitment Examination in the Mongolian language.

The Teacher's Qualification Examination consists of questions about Pedagogics and Educational Psychology. In Article 10 of the Teacher's Law it is stated that there is a possibility for all Chinese citizens to obtain the teacher's qualification and become a teacher. One requirement is that those who want to become a teacher abide by the constitution and the laws. Besides that, they should be interested in education, pass the

qualification exams and have a record of formal schooling as the law states it.

**pre-school training**

Mongolian-Chinese bilingual kindergarten teachers are usually trained in two organisations. The first is the Inner Mongolia Pre-school Teacher's College, and the second is the Department of Education at IMNU.

The Inner Mongolia Pre-school Teachers College, which was established in 1980, is the only senior vocational school designed for Mongolian-Chinese bilingual teaching. The course includes early childhood pedagogy, child healthcare and child psychology. Also, it includes subjects such as children's songs and dances, vocal training, language training, art foundation and appreciation training, and Mongolian culture and handicraft.

The pre-school teachers' education major was implemented in the curriculum of the Department of Education at the IMNU in 1998. This major has two different training objectives: the first is to train teachers for pre-school teacher training colleges and Mongolian kindergartens; the second one is to educate specialists developing products and services for children. These specialists are usually staff of pre-school education institutions, such as community pre-school education instructors, editors of children's books, and editors and directors of children's radio and TV programmes. The main courses at IMNU include human anatomy and physiology, psychology, pedagogy, Chinese education history and foreign education history.

**primary training**

As for the procedures followed at normal universities, teacher training for primary education takes four years. An internship of half a year up to one year is required to accomplish the teacher training. The school curriculum of the normal university includes students' degree subjects, educational psychology and pedagogical knowledge. The internship starts in the last year of the undergraduate course. Students are assigned to certain primary or secondary schools to gain teaching experience through practical training in the classroom.

There used to be Mongolian Teacher's Vocational schools in every league in Inner Mongolia. This were senior vocational schools designed to educate bilingual teachers for Mongolian primary schools. However, since 2000, these vocational normal schools have merged with local universities and colleges. Therefore, both primary and secondary bilingual teachers are educated in universities at the same level nowadays.

### **secondary training**

Students who want to become a teacher within secondary education must attend a normal university and get a bachelor's degree. The study takes four years.

According to the Implementation Plan of the Inner Mongolia Primary and Secondary Bilingual Teacher Training Programme 2012-2020, the content of the bilingual teacher training is divided into the following six categories: headmaster training, backbone teacher training, corresponding course or subject teacher training, school security management training, application of modern educational technology training, and teacher qualification training on mental health education. Bilingual teacher training is provided on five levels, namely state level, autonomous region level, league/city level, town/banner level and school level. Among these, the league/city teacher training is the most essential.

The MOE and the Ministry of Finance implemented the national training programme for primary and secondary school teachers, referred to as the 'National Training Programme', in 2010. It is an important measure to improve the overall quality of primary and secondary school teaching, especially bilingual teaching.

### **in-service training**

The Education Law regulates that in-service training courses are compulsory for all teachers. The training programme is structured according to school types and subjects. It also includes further training for general educational and psychological issues, which are aimed at teachers in all types of schools. In addition, the training programme offers courses

for specific target groups such as school managers or teachers with special tasks.

Bilingual teachers in Mongolian primary and secondary schools are encouraged by schools to pursue further education, for example a master's or doctoral degree. If an in-service teacher is admitted by a higher education institution, the school will guarantee a block release. Teachers are encouraged to apply for short-term training programmes in normal universities in China. At the moment, due to funding problems, the opportunity to participate in the teacher education programme overseas is limited. According to rough estimates, only one or two people from Mongolian schools can go overseas every year.

Teacher's qualifications do not last a lifetime. Teachers need to be registered and are assessed once every five years. The conditions of the registration are mainly based on the performance of the teacher when it comes to morality, annual assessments and training situations. Those who fail or who are delayed are no longer allowed to work in the field of education.

#### statistics

Table 7 displays the number of student enrolments at the 15 universities in Inner Mongolia. The data are split up for university courses which use Chinese as the medium of instruction and courses which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction.

The numbers in the table fit the population distribution within Inner Mongolia. About 20% of the students follow courses which use Mongolian as the medium of instruction and the others follow courses which use Chinese as the medium of instruction.

*Table 7: Statistics on the 15 universities in Inner Mongolia, showing the types of courses and the number of student enrolments in the school year 2015/2016.*

| Types                | 2015                                 |  | 2016                                 |  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
|                      | Chinese as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Chinese as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of enrolments | 31.198                               | 8.052                                  | 34.127                               | 7.811                                  |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017e.

## 7 Adult education

### structure and language courses

Adult schools are established in accordance with the standards and procedures set by the state. The fundamental aim of adult education is to enable all citizens to develop their knowledge and skills. The concepts of lifelong education and lifelong learning apply to adult education based on the National Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and the Development Programme 2010-2020. Educational goals and tasks are stated in the Outline of the Reform and Development of China's Education of 1993.

The state recognises adult education certificates. There are three forms of learning in adult education: self-study, teaching by correspondence, and distance schooling. If adults apply for a self-study course and fulfil the required conditions, they can register at a local educational department. To follow teaching by correspondence course, students need to take the national adult education exam. The entrée exams for distance schooling, are organised by higher education institutions; for this type of schooling, teaching and learning materials are digitalised and available on school websites. When completing their studies, a bachelor's degree can be obtained after a thesis defence and an English assessment. These three types of adult education are often flexible and methods are diverse.

The Inner Mongolia Radio and TV University, established in 1979, is the adult university in Inner Mongolia. It offers informal education to adults covering a broad spectrum of subjects, including activities concerning the Mongolian language and culture. An intensive language-learning course of one month is scheduled annually, which is organised in collaboration with the Department of Mongolian Studies at the IMU.

### language use

The Inner Mongolia Radio and TV University also provides Mongolian-Chinese bilingual education. There are classes where Mongolian is used as the medium of instruction. However, most school

courses use Chinese textbooks and Chinese as the medium of instruction.

Specific teaching material has been developed to teach and learn the basic skills of standard Mongolian. In general, the position of Mongolian in adult education is not very prevalent. However, private adult education that focusses on the Mongolian language and culture is based on private initiatives and sometimes integrated into community-based programmes. For this reason, it is difficult to give a complete overview of the aim, the content and the number of adult classes.

**statistics**

According to statistics provided by the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 693 graduates took courses with Mongolian as the medium of instruction between 2009 and 2016 from various majors at the Inner Mongolia Radio and TV University.

## 8 Educational research

The Department of Mongolian Studies at the universities and the Inner Mongolia Ethnic Affairs Committee institutionally represent Mongolian-oriented research. The main responsibility of the Department of Mongolian Studies is to conduct scientific research on language standards and modernisation. Research on language standards is conducted in the fields of Mongolian languages and dialects, Mongolian history, Mongolian literature and Mongolian folk arts. Research on modernisation includes information processing of the Mongolian language, experimental phonetic studies of the Mongolian language, E-dictionaries, Mongolian encoding and Mongolian network education. The Inner Mongolia Ethnic Affairs Committee collaborates with various scientific research and educational organisations, such as the Committee on Mongolian Terminology and the Mongolian Standard Pronunciation Committee.

The Inner Mongolia Academy of Social Sciences, established in 1958, has a recognised position in public life. It is a comprehensive research institute focusing on philosophy and social sciences, and it is fully funded by the Financial Department of Inner Mongolia. Their research area covers Mongolian history, language, literature, philosophy, economy, nationality and religion. The Inner Mongolia National Conditions Investigation base, the Grassland Culture Research Centre of China and the Inner Mongolia Grassland Culture Research Base are set up by the Inner Mongolia Academy of Social Sciences. The Inner Mongolia Academy has 13 research institutes and libraries altogether. Besides that, it edits and publishes a magazine on the different topics of the research areas in which they work.

Educational research on trilingual education in Mongolian schools has become quite popular in recent years. Several investigation programmes have been set up by educational institutes who focus on ethnic minority trilingual education. This has resulted in several doctoral dissertations, papers and journals on trilingual education. Examples are the dissertation papers: *'Understanding Language Identity from the Perspec-*

*tive of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice: A Case Study of Four Mongolian Trilinguals'* by Ashan (2015) and '*A study on Mongolian Students' English Language Learning in the Background of Mongolian and Chinese Bilingual Education: A Case Study of Mongolian Primary and Secondary Schools in the Xilin Gol League'* by Zhao (2013).

## 9 Prospects

In general, the prospects for Mongolian in education and the Mongolian language look brighter and more positive than they used to. Books, magazines and newspapers are written and translated into Mongolian. Despite comparatively little support, media are growing, and theatre plays and TV series are written and performed in Mongolian.

Some problems that have been identified with respect to Mongolian in education are a deficient legal framework and the lack of adequate resources. There is still a shortage of qualified bilingual teachers in primary and secondary education in remote areas. The conditions and teaching environment in the countryside do not seem to be good enough to attract new teachers. As well, the gap between rural and urban areas is quite big. Besides that, the personal development of in-service bilingual teachers is a problem in rural areas since teacher training is not conducted according to official arrangements. Educational lectures of scientific frontier are not available at schools in rural areas. Therefore, conditions of Mongolian schools need to be improved, especially in those areas.

The tendency of Mongolian primary and secondary school textbooks to feature more digital elements has recently been emphasised. A common task of developers and publishers of ethnic educational material is to promote digitalisation of this cause and to promote the use of digital textbooks by Mongolian students. In the National Long and Medium Term Development of Education 2010-2020, it is stated that "Informational technologies have a revolutionary impact on the development of education, [and] must be given a high priority".

Even though some signs of improvement can be seen, prospects are still not very positive. Since the New Curriculum Framework in 2001, all Mongolian primary and secondary students have started to learn English. This means that Mongolian students need to study three languages at the same time, which is a challenge to Mongolian teachers and students (Wang, 2010). Therefore, research is needed on the effects of the New Curriculum Framework in order to be able to start with effective curriculum planning at Mongolian schools.

## 10 Summary statistics

*Table 1: The Mongolian autonomous regions and provinces and the autonomous prefectures and counties.*

| <b>Autonomous regions and provinces</b> | <b>Autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties</b>  |
|---|--|
| Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region        |  |
| Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region       | Bayingol Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture<br>Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture<br>Mongolian Autonomous county of Hoboksar |
| Qinghai Province                        | Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture<br>Mongolian Autonomous county of Henan                                      |
| Liaoning Province                       | Harqin Left Wing Mongolian Autonomous County<br>Fuxin Mongolian Autonomous County  |
| Jilin Province                          | Mongolian Autonomous county of Qian Gorlos   |
| Heilongjiang Province                   | Dorbod Mongolian Autonomous County   |
| Hebei Province                          | Weichang Manchu and Mongol Autonomous County   |
| Gansu Province                          | Mongolian Autonomous County of Subei   |

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*Note.* Adapted from Chinese National Geography, 2016.

*Table 2: Population statistics of the provinces in China with Mongolian prefectures and counties, plus the city of Beijing in which many Mongols reside.*

| <b>Provinces</b> | <b>Total population of the province</b> | <b>Total number of Mongolian people within the province</b> |
|------------------|---|---|
| Inner Mongolia   | 24.706.321                              | 4.226.093   |
| Xinjiang         | 21.813.334                              | 156.280   |
| Qinghai          | 5.626.722                               | 99.815  |
| Liaoning         | 43.746.323                              | 657.869   |
| Jilin            | 27.462.297                              | 145.039   |
| Heilongjiang     | 38.312.224                              | 125.483   |
| Hebei            | 71.854.202                              | 180.849   |
| Gansu            | 25.575.254                              | 10.935  |
| Beijing          | 19.612.000                              | 76.736  |
| total            | 278.708.677                             | 5.679.099   |

*Note.* Adapted from National Bureau of Statistics of the PRC, 2010.

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*Table 3: Statistics on the type and number of Mongolian kindergartens in Inner Mongolia. Showing the number of students, staff and ethnic Mongolian teachers in the school years 2015/2016.*

| Types                               | 2015                   |  | 2016                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|                                     | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of kindergartens             | 46                     | 316                                    | 27                     | 389                                    |
| Number of students                  | 100.423                | 51.793                                 | 102.584                | 53.579                                 |
| Total number of staff               | 8.333                  | 5.746                                  | 8.461                  | 6.454                                  |
| Number of ethnic Mongolian teachers | 5.922                  | 3.894                                  | 6.198                  | 4.209                                  |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017a.

*Table 4: Statistics on the type and number of Mongolian primary schools in Inner Mongolia. Showing the number of students, staff and ethnic Mongolian teachers in the school years 2015/2016.*

| Types                               | 2015                   |  | 2016                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|                                     | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of primary schools           | 30                     | 285                                    | 29                     | 270                                    |
| Number of students                  | 254.304                | 123.996                                | 268.895                | 122.895                                |
| Total number of staff               | 17.938                 | 16.912                                 | 18.195                 | 16.323                                 |
| Number of ethnic Mongolian teachers | 15.997                 | 14.488                                 | 15.079                 | 14.511                                 |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017b.

*Table 5: Statistics on the type and number of Mongolian secondary schools in Inner Mongolia. Showing the number of students, staff and ethnic Mongolian teachers in the school years 2015/2016.*

| Types   | 2015                   |  | 2016                   |  |
|---|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|   | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of junior and senior high schools              | 17                     | 110                                    | 14                     | 109                                    |
| Number of students in junior and senior high schools  | 121.860                | 52.877                                 | 121.355                | 52.059                                 |
| Total number of staff (junior & senior)               | 27.896                 | 8.122                                  | 28.402                 | 8.021                                  |
| Number of ethnic Mongolian teachers (junior & senior) | 19.976                 | 5.865                                  | 20.807                 | 5.793                                  |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017c.

*Table 6: Statistics on the type and number of Mongolian vocational schools in Inner Mongolia. Showing the number of students, staff and ethnic Mongolian teachers in the school years 2015/2016.*

| Types                               | 2015                   |  | 2016                   |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|                                     | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as a subject | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of vocational schools        | 2                      | 20                                     | 2                      | 19                                     |
| Number of students                  | 16.112                 | 10.196                                 | 9.428                  | 9.304                                  |
| Total number of staff               | 1.953                  | 908                                    | 1.884                  | 907                                    |
| Number of ethnic Mongolian teachers | 1.650                  | 576                                    | 1.626                  | 610                                    |

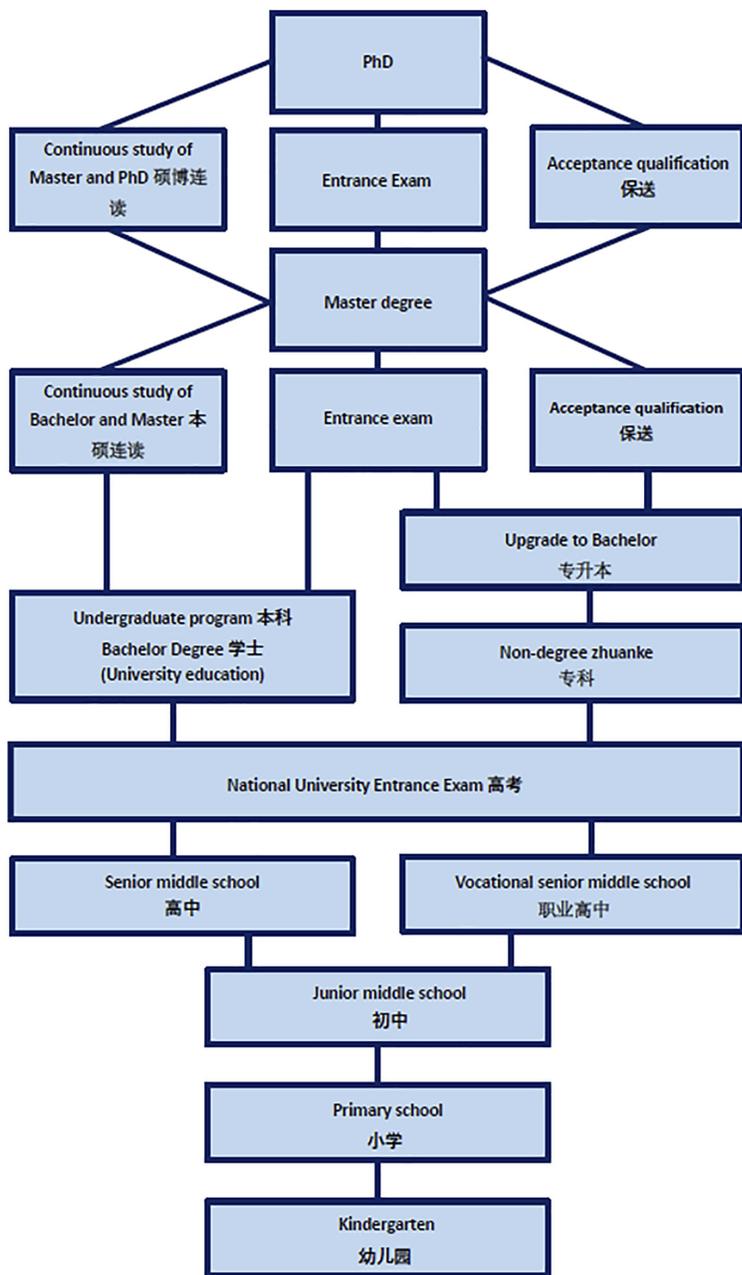
*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017d.

*Table 7: Statistics on the 15 universities in Inner Mongolia, showing the types of courses and the number of student enrolments in the school year 2015/2016.*

| Types                | 2015                                 |  | 2016                                 |  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|
|                      | Chinese as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as the medium of instruction | Chinese as the medium of instruction | Mongolian as the medium of instruction |
| Number of enrolments | 31.198                               | 8.052                                  | 34.127                               | 7.811                                  |

*Note.* From the Department of Education of Inner Mongolia, 2017e.

## Education system in China



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## Addresses

### official bodies

#### **Inner Mongolia Education Press**

89 Xinhua East Ave, Hohhot China  
T 86 0471 6608001  
E [nmgjycbsbgs@163.com](mailto:nmgjycbsbgs@163.com)  
W [www.im-eph.com](http://www.im-eph.com)

#### **The Inner Mongolia Academy of Social Sciences**

129 Daxue East Rd, Saihan District Hohhot Inner Mongolia China  
T 86 0471 4912276  
E [nmshkx22@163.com](mailto:nmshkx22@163.com)  
W [www.nmgass.com.cn](http://www.nmgass.com.cn)

#### **Department of Education of Inner Mongolia**

5 Dingxianglu Xincheng District Hohhot Inner Mongolia China  
T 86 0471 2856709  
E [jyfbgs-iq@163.com](mailto:jyfbgs-iq@163.com)  
W [www.nmgov.edu.cn](http://www.nmgov.edu.cn)

#### **Inner Mongolia Library**

34 Wulanchabu West Rd, Saihan District, Hohhot China  
T 86 0471 6293192  
W [www.nmglb.com](http://www.nmglb.com)

#### **Inner Mongolia TV station**

71 Xinhua Ave, Xincheng District, Hohhot China  
T 86 0471 6630523  
E [info@delehi.com](mailto:info@delehi.com)  
W [www.nmtv.cn](http://www.nmtv.cn)

#### **People's Education Press**

17 Nanda Ave, zhongguancun Haidian District Beijing China  
T 86 010 58758866  
E [pep@pep.com.cn](mailto:pep@pep.com.cn)  
W [www.pep.com.cn](http://www.pep.com.cn)

#### **Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region National Affairs Committee**

63 Xinhua Ave, Hohhot China  
T 86 0471 6946290  
E [hhtmw@sina.com](mailto:hhtmw@sina.com)  
W [www.nmgmzw.gov.cn](http://www.nmgmzw.gov.cn)

### universities

#### **Inner Mongolia University**

235 Daxuelu Saihan District Hohhot Inner Mongolia China  
T 86 0471 4992241  
E [webmaster@imu.edu.cn](mailto:webmaster@imu.edu.cn)  
W [www.imu.edu.cn](http://www.imu.edu.cn)

**Inner Mongolia Normal University**

81 Zhaowudalu Rd, Saihan District, Hohhot, China  
T 86 0471 4392030  
E [rsc@immu.edu.cn](mailto:rsc@immu.edu.cn)  
W [www.immu.edu.cn](http://www.immu.edu.cn)

**Minzu University of China**

27 Zhongguancun South Avenue Beijing, China  
T 86 010 68932902  
E [muc3922@126.com](mailto:muc3922@126.com)  
W [www.muc.edu.cn](http://www.muc.edu.cn)

**Inner Mongolia Agricultural University**

306 Zhaowuda Rd, Saihan District, Hohhot, China  
T 86 0471 4301339  
E [imaunews@126.com](mailto:imaunews@126.com)  
W [www.imau.edu.cn](http://www.imau.edu.cn)

**Inner Mongolia University of Science and Technology**

7 Aerding Ave, Baotou, Inner Mongolia, China  
T 86 595 3195  
E [webmaster@imust.cn](mailto:webmaster@imust.cn)  
W <http://www.imust.edu.cn>

**Inner Mongolia University of Finance and Economics**

185 Beierhuanlu Huimin District Hohhot China  
T 86 0471 5300315  
E [ncddzb@163.com](mailto:ncddzb@163.com)  
W [www.imufe.edu.cn](http://www.imufe.edu.cn)

**Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities**

536 Huolinhe Ave, Tongliao Inner Mongolia China  
T 86 0475 8313435  
E [gls@imun.edu.cn](mailto:gls@imun.edu.cn)  
W [www.imun.edu.cn](http://www.imun.edu.cn)

**Xilingol Vocational School**

11 Mingant Ave, Xilinhot Inner Mongolia China  
E [xlgyxy@xlglvc.cn](mailto:xlgyxy@xlglvc.cn)  
T 86 0479 8261398  
W [www.xlglvc.cn](http://www.xlglvc.cn)

**Inner Mongolia Pre-school Teacher's College**

21 Ordos Ave, Dongsheng Inner Mongolia China  
E [unmzyz@163.com](mailto:unmzyz@163.com)  
T 86 0477 8322166

**Hohhot Mongolian Kindergarten**

6 Xingannanlu Saihan District Hohhot Inner Mongolia China  
E [qeqligsaihan@163.com](mailto:qeqligsaihan@163.com)  
T 86 0471 4699509  
W [www.shqmgzyey.com](http://www.shqmgzyey.com)

**Northwest University for Nationalities**

1 Xibeixicun, Lanzhou, Gansu Province, China

T 86 0931 298300

W [www.xbnu.edu.cn](http://www.xbnu.edu.cn)

**Inner Mongolia Newspaper**

25 Altan Ave, Jinqiao, Saihan District, Hohhot China

E [nmbgfg@163.com](mailto:nmbgfg@163.com)

T 86 0471 6659597

W [www.nmgnews.com.cn](http://www.nmgnews.com.cn)

## Other websites on minority languages

**Mercator Research Centre** [www.mercator-research.eu](http://www.mercator-research.eu)  
Homepage of the Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning. The website contains the series of Regional dossiers, a database with organisations, a bibliography, information on current activities, and many links to relevant websites.

**Mercator Network** [www.mercator-network.eu](http://www.mercator-network.eu)  
General site of the Mercator European Network of Language Diversity Centres. It gives information about the network and leads you to the homepages of the network partners.

**European Commission** <http://ec.europa.eu/languages>  
The website of the European Commission gives information about the EU's support for language diversity.

**Council of Europe** <http://conventions.coe.int>  
*European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992) and *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995). European Treaty Series 148 and 157, Strasbourg.

**Eurydice** <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice>  
Eurydice is the information network on education in Europe. The site provides information on all European education systems and education policies.

### European Parliament Committee – supporting analyses database

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/supporting-analyses-search.html>.

In this database you will find research papers produced by the European Parliament's research service. A study for the CULT Committee, conducted by Mercator, is published in 2017: *Minority Languages and Education: Best Practices and Pitfalls*.

**NPLD**

**<http://www.npld.eu/>**

The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) is a European wide network working in the field of language policy & planning for Constitutional, Regional and Small-State Languages (CRSS) across Europe.

**FUEN**

**<https://www.fuen.org/>**

The Federal Union of European Nationalities is the umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities/ethnic groups in Europe and represents the interests of European minorities on regional, national and European level.

**ELEN**

**<https://elen.ngo/>**

The European Language Equality Network (ELEN) is a non-governmental organisation that has as its goal to promote and protect European lesser-used languages, (RMLs), to work towards linguistic equality for these languages, and multilingualism, under the broader framework of human rights, and to be a voice for the speakers of these languages at all levels

## What can the Mercator Research Centre offer you?

**mission & goals** The Mercator European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning addresses the growing interest in multilingualism and endeavours to promote linguistic diversity within and outside Europe. The centre focuses on research, policy, and practice in the field of multilingualism and language learning. Through the creation, circulation and application of knowledge in the field of language learning at school, at home and through cultural participation, the Mercator Research Centre aims to provide for the increasing need of language communities to exchange experiences and to cooperate. Not only in European context, but also beyond the borders of Europe. Though the main focus lies in the field of regional and minority languages, immigrant languages are topics of study as well.

**partners** The Mercator Research Centre is the leading partner of the European Mercator network, initiated by the European Commission in 1987. The Mercator network partners are: Mercator Media, hosted at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, Mercator Legislation, hosted at the Ciemen Foundation, the University of Barcelona in Barcelona, the Stockholm University in Sweden and the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Hungary. Mercator also works and co-operates closely with a large number of research organisations and universities. This cooperation includes partners in the province Fryslân and other parts of the Netherlands, as well as partners across Europe and beyond. The main funding body of the Mercator Research Centre is the provincial government of Fryslân. The EU and regional authorities in Europe also regularly fund projects and activities.

**research** The research activities of the Mercator Research Centre focus on various aspects of bilingual and trilingual education such as language proficiency in different languages, interaction in the multilingual classroom, and teachers' qualifications for working in a multilingual classroom. Latest developments look at how educational models for minority languages can also cater for

immigrant pupils. Whenever possible, research is carried out in a comparative perspective. Results are disseminated through publications, conferences and publications in collaboration with Mercator's partners.

**conferences** The Mercator Research Centre organises conferences and seminars on a regular basis. The main target groups are professionals, researchers and policymakers from all member states of the Council of Europe and beyond. Themes for the conferences are: assessment & best practice, educational models, development of minimum standards, teacher training and the application of the Common European Framework of Reference.

**q&a** If you have any questions, please contact us at:  
mercator@fryske-akademy.nl.

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c/o Fryske Akademy  
Doelestrjitte 8  
P.O. Box 54  
NL-8900 AB Ljouwert/Leeuwarden  
The Netherlands

T 0031 (0) 58 - 234 3027  
W [www.mercator-research.eu](http://www.mercator-research.eu)  
E [mercator@fryske-akademy.nl](mailto:mercator@fryske-akademy.nl)