



GLOBAL Impact

Spring 2018



MEALS for Mongolia

Mongolia, formerly part of the Soviet Union, was economically devastated when communism fell. Geographically, Mongolia is harshly situated—the vast but landlocked country is bordered with mountains to the north and west and the Gobi Desert to the south. Although Mongolia is called “*The Land of Blue Sky*,” thanks to over 200 days of sunshine each year, the winters are long and harsh, the summers short and dry, and the soil rocky. Some areas are considered to be unsuitable for agriculture.

That is, until ADRA brought the MEAL project to the Ulanbaatar region and planted the seeds of knowledge that Mongolians needed to lift themselves up and out of financial insecurity and hunger.

MEAL is a nutrition and agricultural training program that teaches participants how to grow their own food, improve their health, and generate income.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, each Mongolian became entitled to a small plot of land called a hasha. To claim it, they needed only to find a free piece of land and register

it. Many Mongolians migrated to the region surrounding Ulanbaatar, the capital city, because they believed there were more opportunities there. This proved untrue for many. Now, nearly half of the country’s three million citizens live in the Ulanbaatar region. This is where ADRA has focused its efforts for the MEAL program.

ADRA began by going door to door to determine whose needs were greatest. MEAL participants were put into groups of about 15 individuals located near each other. These were called Self Help Groups (SHGs). These SHGs were then assigned an agronomist and a trained resource volunteer who taught participants to grow and preserve food, build greenhouses and root cellars, and work together for mutual benefit. Since October 2012, 20 SGHs were created and more than 1,100 households and over 4,000 people have been helped directly. But MEAL’s reach extends much farther, as participants have shared what they have learned with their neighbours, families, and friends and more and more Mongolians are helping and supporting each other to achieve financial and food security.

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This happens via the joint efforts of ADRA and the SHGs. ADRA provides training, teaching participants about planting, harvesting, and irrigation; cooking, pickling, and preserving food; nutrition; and later, business and other skills. ADRA also provides basic supplies like seeds and materials to construct greenhouses, cellars, and irrigation systems. Participants provide the labour to construct and maintain the structures and gardens, and to operate their SHGs day to day.

In a place where people once believed nothing could grow, Mongolians are growing carrots, tomatoes, zucchini, lettuce, spinach, and berries. Every year, the yields increase. As their confidence and knowledge grows, the SHGs experiment with new fruits and vegetables. Solar greenhouses have extended the growing season from three to five months, and root cellars are allowing people to preserve food through the harsh winters.

Beyond these huge strides in agriculture, the SHGs are selling excess food and earning incomes, which are increasing with each passing year. Many have also branched out and begun selling handmade products in the off season. ADRA has provided additional training to help the SHGs with these business ventures. Members sew traditional Mongolian clothing, hats, shoes, blankets, purses, wall décor, and so on. They buy the materials, supplies, and tools using their SHG savings and work in facilities provided by the government. They sell through personal, familial, and social networks currently but have set their sights on expanding.

Most of the SHGs have even been able to start their own credit and loan programs. While ADRA provided some business and financial training to assist them, the SHGs have done this on their own initiative. Participants invested part of their profits into a group savings account, granting members access to financing at low or no interest in order to pursue other business ventures. They plan to eventually register as cooperatives that can open up more business and financial opportunities. One participant says, "Most of us never planted gardens before [but now] we're united as a group, learning together and now [able to] take on business opportunities."

Namshir, the "father" of one SHG, says, "Through ADRA, I've learned complex knowledge. Gardening, planning, financials, business. Our knowledge is extended. Since I joined the ADRA project, my family income has increased, enough to get us through the whole year now. I built a greenhouse and root cellar and give support to others. We work as a team."

Those who have participated in the MEAL project are refreshed and energized and ready to move forward into a more hopeful, stable future. A member of another SHG says, "Since we are involved in this project we're more active, we feel more purposeful. We can solve many things as a group, we give hands to support each other. This project has made our lives completely different."

Across the 20 SHGs now in existence, several sentiments are echoed: Mongolians are able to support their families in ways they never considered before; they can learn from each other and achieve much as a team; they have learned enough to keep going forward and are motivated to do so; but mostly, they have become united with one another. They have become a family who can now look to the future with hope.

"You can see the success of the project. Thank you for giving us an opportunity to grow. You gave us a chance. Thanks, ADRA for giving attention to our nation," summed up one participant.



Refrains for the Rohingya

On November 25th, 2017 nearly 100 people gathered in a tiny church in Tantallon, Nova Scotia, near Peggy's Cove. Those in attendance included people from the community and other churches as well as students and faculty from nearby Sandy Lake Academy (SLA). They came together for an evening of music to raise funds for ADRA Canada.

Young children to seniors performed everything from choral to multi-instrument pieces. Among them were The Country Side of Bluegrass, a local band who are members of nearby Williams Black United Church; the Music Director at SLA, Kristii Rasmussen, and many SLA students. Eleventh-grader Justin Graça played his cello. Heidi and Katya McBeth, ages 5 and 11

respectively, played their violins. Five-year-old Nia Wilson sang.

This year, funds were raised for Rohingya refugees, a "stateless" minority described as one of the most persecuted in history. Since 2015, the Rohingya have fled by the thousands into Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, where they hope to receive humanitarian support. In the beginning of August 2017, 600,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh. The funds raised were designated to help these most recent refugees.

Now in its third year, the annual Tantallon Concert continues to make a difference through its support of ADRA's work abroad. This tiny church raised \$1,180 in one very special evening.



SHARE YOUR ADRA STORY

We'd love to hear from people involved in ADRA's mission. Why not send us a few lines about what you and/or your group are doing? Send 200 words, a picture* of your activities and your contact details to stayintouch@adra.ca.

*Digital photos should be a minimum of 3 megapixels.

By sending photos and stories to ADRA Canada you give permission for either to be published at the discretion of ADRA Canada.

What is a 'Gender Equality Specialist'?

At the beginning of January, we announced that we had hired Diana Opollo to be our 'Gender Equality Specialist'. This role is new to many people, including some of us here at ADRA.

ADRA Canada demonstrates God's love and compassion to all persons, and is committed to the wellbeing of all people. In many of the places where we work, gender-based discrimination is pervasive. Women, men, girls, and boys may not have the same access to or benefits from the resources in their communities.

Women, men, girls and boys also have very unique and different needs that require unique and different approaches.

For example, in some of the communities where we work, women do not have the same decision-making power as men. Some women are not able to visit a health centre unless given permission by a male family member, even in an emergency. In some communities men are seen as 'unmanly' if they take an equal role in childrearing.

Diana will help these communities to understand that all people should be treated with equal respect and that families are stronger when women and men share responsibilities and make decisions together.

She is tasked with ensuring that men, women, boys, and girls are being treated with equity in all of our projects.

EMBRACE-ing the Radio

ADRA is spreading a message of health in the Philippines. A maternal and child health project, called EMBRACE, seeks to increase health and reduce deaths of mothers and children. In addition to community-level efforts to help the most at-risk mothers and children, the project also uses the radio to broaden its scope. ADRA is now getting EMBRACE's message across the Camarines Sur area—and is reaching more families than ever before.

In November 2016, ADRA launched EMBRACE radio ads, running several daily. In January 2017, they began a weekly one-hour program, hosted by a local DJ, featuring health centre staff, health volunteers, experts, and ADRA staff as guests. Topics include safe motherhood, birth spacing, newborn care, immunization, mother and infant nutrition, and proper hygiene and sanitation, among others. The program features a daily question, and five winners receive a voucher for groceries.

Mayjoy, a mother of seven, began listening because she wanted to learn more about family health. She had never heard of ADRA or EMBRACE before but has now gained valuable knowledge. Jessa, a young mother of two, says she has learned about proper nutrition, balanced meals, caring for babies after birth and sanitation: *"We learned a lot ... and knowledge cannot be taken away from us," she says. Chrisel, another mom, says, "We hope ADRA will stay a long time and teach us more."*

Gabriel Sembrano, EMBRACE Project Manager, says they are using the radio because *"mixed communication methods produce the best results to change behaviours"* positively. And it is working. Now ADRA is EMBRACE-ing countless more mothers and children than ever before in the Philippines.



ADRA's Mission:

ADRA works with people in poverty and distress to create just and positive change through empowering partnerships and responsible action.

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Executive Director Retirement and New Executive Director

Please join us in thanking God for the excellent leadership of Executive Director James Astleford over last several years. As he retires, please pray that God will abundantly bless him in his future plans.

Please also join us in thanking God for His provision of a new Executive Director, Stephen Matthews. May God bless him and his family as they prepare to move to Ontario and may God prepare him for his new role.

Hunger

Hunger is still very much an issue for many regions of eastern Africa and the Middle East. Drought and conflict continue to impact millions of people. Each one of those people is dear to the heart of God.

Please pray that all will receive that which they need to survive. Please pray that rain will come at the right time to alleviate the drought and allow those still on their lands a bountiful harvest. Please also pray that peace will come to those living in fear.

Proposals for Emergency Responses

Our emergency response staff have worked hard to prepare project proposals for various emergencies around the world. These proposals have been submitted to funders and we are waiting to learn the outcome. Please join us in praying for these proposals which will enable ADRA Canada to continue to meet some of the most urgent needs in the world. May God's hand be on the proposals as they are reviewed, and may His perfect will be accomplished.

Rohingya

Our hearts go out to the hundreds of thousands of refugees streaming into Bangladesh from Rakhine State in Myanmar. Please join us in praying for them as they face myriad challenges such as shelter, food, and clean water. May they be comforted in their grief and shock and may their needs be met in a timely way. Please also pray for the ADRA teams that are responding to this crisis. May the way forward be made smooth. May the workers be blessed with wisdom and strength.

Refugees

Some people became refugees today. They will have fled to another country seeking safety from those who would harm them and their families. Other people have spent years living away from their homelands. Many, including children, have been separated from their families and may never be reunited. While they may have found physical safety, the emotional effects may be permanent. Please pray that each of these children of God will be blessed with peace, security, and proper home.

Our Supporters

We are so grateful to you, our generous and prayerful supporters. We thank God for your time, effort, prayers, and support. Because of you, this ministry is able to continue to share God's love, mercy, and justice around the world. We pray that God will bless each of you and your families.