

# THE NOMADS

ADRA Mongolia Official Newsletter

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*DAVAADUREN Renchin's story*  
follow her story on page 7




ADRA





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## Country Director's Corner

I am quite excited to share with you the team's scorecard for the third quarter of 2023 as we continue to serve Mongolia with justice, compassion, and love.

As the summer fades and gears for the autumn, the team's singular focus is to maximize the limited time given to make sure that the indicators on the programmatic side are on the upward trend and target activities are being met in the number of projects we implement.

Firstly, the Agency welcomes the newest members of the Agency to be part of the NextGen CELEBRATIONS! Mongolia - a non-communicable diseases (NCD) pilot project being funded by ADRA International in partnership with the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, ADRA Austria, and ADRA Hongkong to mitigate the risk factors of NCD in the country as Mongolia is one of the leading countries globally with a high NCD-related deaths.

As the project rolls out, it will espouse a holistic lifestyle approach amongst adolescents 12-15 years old in four pilot schools in Ulaanbaatar aiming to change of behavior, health-wise. The tool was created by the Seventh-day Adventist Church known as CELEBRATIONS, an acronym that caters to the holistic well-being of an individual to achieve his or her maximum potential and enjoy quality of life.

Last July, the Programs team from ADRA International visited our ongoing project in Darkhan on Fine Wool Sheep Breeding Project which aims to create an elite nucleus flock that will support our local herders to have a sustainable form of livelihood by leveraging their expertise in raising animals, particularly sheep of very high wool quality and be connected to the value/supply chain of making high-quality wool products. As the project progresses, the team will continue to expand the pool of the nucleus flock that will eventually be shared with all the herders in the country.

Also, please enjoy and learn about the progress of our pastureland management project and the impact it is creating in the lives of our beneficiary partners on the project site. Together on this issue is a quick look at how our dedicated staff continues to commit and lead our initiatives on the ground and how it contributes to the Agency's purpose of serving humanity so that all may live as God intended.

Until our next issue and enjoy reading!

Blessings,



WINDELL M. MARANAN



## PROJECT IN FOCUS

### *NextGen* CELEBRATIONS! *Mongolia*

**DONORS:** ADRA International, General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, ADRA Austria, and ADRA Hong Kong.

**BUDGET:** 500,000 USD

**DURATION:** 3 years (June 1, 2023 to May 31, 2026)

**FOCUS AREA:** Bayanzurkh, Chingeltei - Tusgal School, Nalaikh - Erdmiin Orgil School / Songino Khaikhan Districts of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

**BENEFICIARY PARTNERS:** 2,000 adolescents ages 12-15, 2,000 parents/caretakers, and 40 school staff.

### GOAL

To empower Mongolian adolescents ages 12-15 to practice healthy lifestyles leading to lowering their risk for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The focus of this project is to apply the CELEBRATIONS healthy lifestyle approach/tool which will focus on six components: Choices, Exercise, Temperance, Optimism, Nutrition, and Social Support/Mental health.

### EXPECTED RESULTS

Upon the completion of this project, adolescents aged 12-15 residing in communities surrounding four schools will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to integrate positive and healthy behaviors into their daily routines. Through the project's efforts and interventions, these young individuals will have a better understanding of making informed choices that promote their overall well-being and reduce the risk of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).





## SUSTAINABILITY

To promote sustainability in both identified adolescents' behaviors and the mechanisms in place to support future generations enjoying healthy lifestyle. Ensuring sustained individual behaviors entails fostering effective behavior change within a supportive environment, forming the core of the NextGen CELEBRATIONS! Mongolia NCD project. To secure a sustainable impact on future adolescents between ages from 12-15, a comprehensive systems approach is adopted. This approach actively involves the community, including adolescents along with their parents/caregivers, local authorities, school leaders, teachers, staff, clinic personnel, and local businesses serving students. Together, they collaborate to develop and implement practical policy documents and collaborative healthy activities that foster positive norm and culture promoting healthy lifestyle, transcending the boundaries of this project. The project focuses on promoting sustained positive behaviors in identified adolescents while establishing sustainable mechanisms that prioritize the well-being of healthy adolescents through active community involvement and policy development.



# Key Accomplishments

## NextGen CELEBRATIONS! Mongolia

In June 2023, ADRA Mongolia embarked on a collaborative journey with esteemed partners, including the Mongolia Mission of Seventh-day Adventists, the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Education and Science (MES), the World Health Organization (WHO), and others, to initiate the groundbreaking NextGen CELEBRATIONS! Mongolia Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Project. We are immensely grateful for the support of our generous donors, including ADRA International, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Health Department), ADRA Austria, and ADRA China-Hong Kong. Their commitment enables us to make a substantial impact on the health and well-being of Mongolia's adolescents.

**Empowering Mongolia's Youth** - The NextGen CELEBRATIONS! Mongolia NCD Project is a visionary endeavor aiming to empower adolescents aged 12 to 15. Our goal is to inspire them to actively contribute to the prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Mongolia. This empowerment journey involves equipping these young minds with essential information, knowledge, and opportunities for behavior change. We're achieving this through the guidance of influencers and experts. These adolescents are actively involved in designing culturally and age-appropriate strategies to address critical gaps in areas like diet, exercise, and lifestyle choices.

**The Launch Ceremony of the NCD Project** - On July 17th, ADRA Mongolia celebrated the official launch of the NextGen CELEBRATIONS! Mongolia - NCD Project at the Topaz Hall, located in the Blue Sky Hotel, Ulaanbaatar's capital city. The event was attended by representatives from ADRA International, including Sonya Funna (Senior Director for Programs and Innovation), Josue Orellana (Health Director), and Sharon Tobing (Senior Health Technical Advisor), alongside Windell M. Maranan (Country Director / ADRA Mongolia) and various key stakeholders.

**Recognition and Media Spotlight** - The NextGen CELEBRATIONS! Mongolia (NCD) Project launch received well-deserved recognition and media coverage on July 18th, featuring on Mongolia's NTV News.







**The Launch Workshop** - The project then took off with a dynamic start-up workshop at Red Rock Resort in Terej National Park from July 18 to 19, 2023. This workshop saw essential partners from the Mongolia Mission, dedicated school principals, technical experts from ADRA International, as well as ADRA Mongolia's NCD staff and senior management team coming together. The primary objective was to foster a shared understanding among all key stakeholders to effectively work together towards achieving the project's overarching goal.

**Signing of Memoranda of Understanding:** - On August 17th, an inspiring moment took place at the ADRA Mongolia office in Ulaanbaatar as two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed, setting the stage for positive change and growth. Tusgal Secondary School and Erdmiin Orgil Public School have united with ADRA Mongolia in a pioneering effort, officially marking the commencement of the «NextGen CELEBRATIONS! Mongolia» pilot project. The unwavering commitment of Principal T.Ulzijjargal from Tusgal and O.Oyuntuya from Erdmiin Orgil, coupled with the visionary leadership of Windell M. Maranan, ADRA Mongolia Country Director, sets the groundwork for a journey of continuous and profound transformation.

**School Selection** - The project expanded its reach by carefully selecting two additional schools in accordance with the selection criteria, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Education Department on August 25th. These schools include General Education School №84 and 'Hugjil' Complex School.

**MEAL and Baseline Survey** - The project's evaluation protocol has been meticulously finalized and developed in partnership with ADRA International and Loma Linda University of Public Health. We are currently in the process of seeking official IRB approval from the Ministry of Health (MOH). Upon obtaining this approval, we will commence the baseline survey at the designated target schools.

**Celebrating the New School Year** - Our NCD team welcomed the new school year with open arms during the opening ceremony of the four selected schools on September 1st. We expressed our deep appreciation to the principals of these schools for their collaboration with our project and wished them a successful new school year.

# Our Stories

## Pasture Land – Use It Sustainably (PLUS) Project

**Summer Grazing Plan Reviewed** - On June 14 to July 28, 2023, PLUS field officer P. Odontuya conducted follow-up and meeting sessions with the 48 herders (24 males, 24 females) of the 4 baghs of Ider soum. The 10 Grazing Plans for summer 2023 that were developed with Savory Institute as part of Pasture Holistic Management onsite training were reviewed during the sessions. About 60 percent of herders have tried implementing the grazing plans with their neighboring herders, however, in some places, there was weak cooperation between herders and some summer grazing plans were insufficient. Updating the plans and soliciting strong cooperation between herders were the main focus of the activities held.



**Monitoring Trip** - In the last quarter of 2022, four enclosed plots were constructed in different baghs (villages) of Ider soum (district) of Zavkhan Province for demonstration purposes as the herder households of the PLUS Project implemented their Summer Grazing Plan.

During the monitoring visit conducted by the project team with Ms. D Ganchimeg (PLUS Project Manager) and Mr. Windell Maranan (ADRA Mongolia Country Director) on August 20-26, 2023; considerable changes were observed inside the enclosed plots wherein grass grew up to 30cm in height after livestock impacts (continued inside plot grazing for 2-3 days then animal presence restrictions afterward) in comparison to soil and grass conditions outside the plots.

The monitoring activities also included the team reinforcing and repairing some damaged areas of the fencing around the demonstration plots as well as meeting with 20 local herders in four baghs to continue to advocate for the holistic management approach and discuss and review their Summer Grazing Plan including its successes and challenges.

The project is being funded by Aargau and Zurich Cantons (provinces) in partnership with ADRA Switzerland as part of climate change adaptation (CCA) to mitigate the negative effects of global warming and desertification affecting Mongolia.



## Success Story

### DAVAASUREN Renchin

Mrs. DAVAASUREN Renchin was born in 1969 in Ider Soum, Zavkhan Aimag and became a herder in 1986 by following the footsteps of her father. She was married to Mr. D. Garavnyam who died unexpectedly and was left with the big responsibilities of raising her three sons and taking care of her old father all by herself. It was the one of the hardest times of her life.

Recently, Davaasuren was facing another life challenge. She lost almost all her livestock due to the extreme Dzud in 2000, which was the whole source of her livelihood. Aware of her responsibilities as a mother and a daughter, she moved to the soum center to have an income by sewing clothes, especially Mongolian traditional costumes – deel, which she learnt from her mother when she was a child. Davaasuren lived in the soum(district) center for 5 years and then moved to Zavkhan aimag (province) center to continually work as a tailor for 3 more years. As a family, they were barely surviving with her meager income.

As her children is becoming older, Davaasuren planned to go to back to the countryside to become a herder again. A local community council, aware of her struggles and wanting to help her, gave a cow with a calf and 8 sheep with lambs; along with Mr. Bold, a local businessman from Tosontsengel soum of Zavkhan aimag, that gave her an additional 4 calves. Since then, the number of Davaasuren's animals has increased by more than 100 due to her hard work.

In addition, Davaasuren being a beneficiary partner of ADRA's Pasture Land Use It Sustainably (PLUS) Project expressed that the project has given her a big opportunity to better process milk and milk products at household level that greatly improved her livelihood. In particular, selling yak milk to Ider Milk Initiative facility under PLUS Project was very helpful for herders in 2021.

She also expressed that nowadays, the pasture land capacity is overused due to a large number of livestock and improper use of it. Herders do continually graze their animals on the same pastures and do not let the pasture rest and recover again. Therefore, she said, *"We, herders, wanted to protect the natural environment and our pasture land. We cannot imagine our livelihood without well - managed pastures. Furthermore, I am very happy that my neighboring herders discussed and agreed to start implementing what they have learned from the PLUS Project on the ground in order to see the results of better pasture management."*



## News Bits

### Fine Wool Sheep Breeding Pilot Project



In 1990, Mongolia's shift from communism to a market economy saw a surge in livestock numbers, damaging the environment. Fine wool production also suffered due to the collapse of breeding programs.

To combat this, a Fine Wool Sheep Breeding project was initiated in 2022. It imports high-genetic-merit Merino and Dohne Merino embryos for Mongolian ewes. This project aims to revive fine wool sheep populations and improve genetics over time.

ADRA Mongolia is aiding this effort by collaborating with the National Livestock Gene Bank and collecting data on production characteristics to identify elite animals.

In parallel, they are conducting a fine wool value chain analysis to boost herders' incomes and the wool processing chain.

Looking forward, the Artificial Insemination and Embryo Transfer program is set for October 2023, with Australian experts assisting in training Mongolian veterinarians for its success.



# Sonya's Visit.

Darkhan Province, Mongolia - July 20, 2023

Sonya Funna, Senior Director for Programs and Innovation at ADRA International, visited Mongolia's Darkhan Province on July 20th to oversee a project dedicated to strengthening the sustainable livelihoods of local shepherders.

The primary goal of the project is to empower shepherders by improving the quality of wool they produce and increasing its quantity. This initiative enables herders to secure better prices for their wool and build a more sustainable livelihood.

During her visit, Sonya toured the National Center for Livestock Gene Bank, highlighting their collaborative efforts to revive the fine wool sheep flocks that will help increase the number and quality of merino fine wool products in the country. She also engaged directly with local herders, gaining insights into their unique needs and challenges. This interaction reaffirmed ADRA's unwavering commitment to enhancing the herders' overall well-being.

A visit to a local wool boot factory further emphasized the project's significance. This factory directly purchases wool from local herders, guaranteeing them a consistent income stream and a dependable supply of high-quality wool for their products. It not only strengthens the local economy but also contributes to Mongolia's exports.

Sonya's visit on July 20th underscores ADRA International's commitment to strengthening the sustainable livelihoods of Mongolia's shepherders through the improvement of wool quality and quantity. This initiative holds the promise of brighter economic prospects and an enhanced quality of life for these hardworking individuals.



# STAFF CORNER

## WHEN DID YOU FIRST JOIN ADRA AND WHY?

I was employed by ADRA Mongolia as a Project Manager for the "Pasture Land – Use it Sustainably" PLUS Project on April 01, 2022. Before joining ADRA Mongolia, for more than 18 years, I worked in development programs and projects funded by other international organizations, such as the former German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), UNDP (United Nations Development Program), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), focusing on community development and community-based conservation fields. Based on my community development expertise, I wanted to continually work with herders – local communities. Therefore, I joined ADRA to better contribute to the rural development of the country.

## WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR POSITION?

Working as a Project Manager is sometimes challenging, like dealing with stakeholders, project beneficiaries, donors, and staff; managing overall project implementation, financial expenditures and ensuring milestone accomplishment, etc.

I love my work when I see some positive changes and

in the project implementation. Public awareness activities for herders and their empowerment, particularly capacity building of women herders are important for the PLUS project implementation. Recently, we have observed some positive results, namely: herders and local governments have a better understanding of Pasture Holistic Management and they have tried to implement it on the ground. This has been lovely. Also, I am proud that the project that I have managed has definitely contributed to climate change issues, which is one of the biggest global environmental challenges.

## CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT ONE OF YOUR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES WORKING IN ADRA?

Working for one and half years in the organization is a short period, but I have met many good people and made friends with my colleagues in ADRA. Even though I have worked in the development field for 20 years, I'm still learning a lot here. I believe that I will work for ADRA for many more years, with many memorable experiences in the future.

## WHAT DOES THE WORK OF ADRA MEAN TO YOU?

The work of ADRA means to me that it really supports the development of people in need through the betterment of their livelihood. In a few words: the Right Support – Better Results!



18  
months

*Dorj Ganchemeq*

**Project Manager**  
PLUS Project



ADRA Mongolia



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Compassion  
Love*