

Armenia: What will they eat tomorrow?

Five year-old Arega's father had a stroke and is now bedridden. His mother must provide for this impoverished family of seven, working as hard as she can. But she can never be sure that her children won't go to bed hungry. Some of the funds raised through the 30 Hour Famine will help improve nutrition for children in Armenia.



Winter has come to Armenia. Its presence is felt most acutely in impoverished, rural villages—in homes like Arega's. Thirty-six year-old Marine Javadyan runs a household of four children, her bedridden husband and an elderly mother-in-law. With little job opportunities in the immediate area, the family relies on a small monthly poverty allowance of \$105 and income from odd jobs.

"It is very difficult to take care of a big family, when you don't know what your children will eat tomorrow," says Marine. "If only my husband was able to earn some money, but he needs to be cared for."

"I do some odd jobs, gather potatoes for neighbors and to earn some additional money, but it is never enough. It does not ensure the children are not hungry when they go to bed. I am never sure of what will happen tomorrow," she says.

Marine's husband, Levon, recently suffered a stroke and is now unable to care for their livestock or earn a living outside of the home for his family. Malnutrition is worsening his poor health and he often faints.

Levon receives medical treatment from the local medical post free of charge and the local doctor visits the family regularly to monitor Levon's condition.

"God bless we receive free medical treatment, but it's not enough for my husband's recovery. The doctor says he needs proper nutrition to aid in his recovery," says Marine.

Winters here are harsh, lasting half the year and raising additional concerns about how to ensure nutrition and heating for the family. "We have some animal manure to burn for heating this winter," says Marine, showing the stored pile of manure in front of their house. "But winters are so severe here—it feels like they will never end."

NOTE TO EDITOR: Some proceeds from this year's 30 Hour Famine will help improve the nutritional and health status of children in the Talin community development program by promoting healthy, balanced, age-appropriate nutrition. World Vision will also help ensure the availability of the staple food in the area.

Eat nothing. Do something.

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