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January 26, 2008

Letter to the Editor

In response to “The Starvelings,” The Economist, January 26

Sir—I totally agree with your conclusion in “The starvelings” (January 24) that aid organizations must look again at the problem of world hunger if child malnutrition is to be remedied. Could I suggest you look at the compelling approach adopted by The Hunger Project, which is working with women and men to end their own hunger on a sustainable basis.

The solution for child malnutrition does not lie in stop-gap measures such as food supplementation, but rather in ending the discrimination and marginalization that girls and women confront across the developing world.

Our work, backed by study after study, demonstrates that girls empowered by education and equity in regard to nutrition and health care relative to their brothers, grow up to be healthier women and healthier women give birth to better nourished, healthier children. It is no coincidence that the highest rates of child malnutrition are found in South Asia, which is also home to some of the world's most severe gender discrimination.

The evidence is clear. Now, the international community needs to take urgent action.

Jill Lester
President & CEO
The Hunger Project