

Voices for CHANGE



OXFAM
Canada

>>> DONOR NEWSLETTER >>> FALL 2020 >>> OXFAM.CA >>>

IN THIS ISSUE >>> YOUR COMPASSION AT WORK IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC...PAGE 2
>>> CYCLONE IDAI UPDATE & FIGHTING THE 'TRIPLE CRISIS' IN BANGLADESH...PAGE 3 & 4
>>> THE DARK SIDE OF LOCKDOWN...PAGE 5 >>> YOUR LEGACY GIFT WILL CHANGE LIVES ...PAGE 6

COVID-19 UPDATE

On March 18th, 2020 Oxfam declared COVID-19 a global priority. A disaster unlike any other.

In those early days of the pandemic, it became clear to us just how deadly this virus could be to the millions of people living without access to healthcare. Without soap. Or space to distance. Or running water.

Left unchecked, we knew that COVID-19 could claim as many as 40 million lives. And push half a billion people into poverty.

WE APPEALED TO OUR DONORS FOR HELP. AND YOU WERE THERE.

Since that day, you've helped Oxfam and our partners reach nearly 4.5 million people in 62 countries.

You've provided food, water and sanitation. You are helping us stand with the most vulnerable.

In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, your compassion has reached Nur Jahan.

"I have been living in this refugee camp for more than three years. There are many challenges here, including hot weather. It's tough to live inside these tents.

There is a water crisis here.



We know about COVID-19. We know that we have to clean our hands often with soap to prevent the disease. That we have to maintain distance from each other. And if someone is sick with a pain in the throat or a fever, we have to take that person to the hospital.

That's why we cannot go to the market. And we are not able to work. We do not have any money - we cannot buy what we need.

If we can eat well, we will stay healthy. If we can get soap, we can wash our hands, take a shower, and stay away from the disease."

You are helping us respond to people's most urgent needs. But more than ever, COVID-19 has starkly revealed the cracks in society that put poor people most at risk.

The world's most marginalized people are not powerless. They are not voiceless. Together, you and Oxfam can ensure those voices are heard.

YOUR COMPASSION AT WORK IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

How do you prepare to fight a pandemic in a country ravaged by seven years of war? Where confinement is simply not an option?

That's the challenge facing Lily-Madeleine Séguin, a Canadian working for Oxfam in the Central African Republic (CAR).

Lily is passionate about her work. And as she learned firsthand from helping Oxfam's Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2018, *"to fight COVID-19 in CAR, we must listen to the communities."*

Here is Lily's update on the situation in CAR.

"Women are on the front line! In most cases, women are the ones who fetch water and take care of the family, sick parents or children stranded at home because the schools are closed.

This is the tragedy with COVID-19, or Ebola: the people most at risk are those who take care of the sick. It attacks our very capacity for humanity, and



this makes the disease even harder to deal with.

CAR is one of the least prepared countries in the world to deal effectively with COVID-19. It is one of the planet's poorest countries, where one in two people is already in need of aid. The country's health system is extremely weak. Most health services are provided by humanitarian organizations, which are already fighting epidemics of measles and malaria.

The worst-case scenario would be a severe outbreak of COVID-19 combined with any upsurge in violence that would force NGOs to leave the country.

There can be nothing worse than an epidemic in a civil war!

Right now, we have a window of opportunity to act in CAR. But overall, the international community is overwhelmingly focused on how the pandemic is affecting their own countries.

Our greatest hope is that the world will not forget the Central African Republic."

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YOU SENT BUCKET LOADS OF LOVE TO CYCLONE IDAI SURVIVORS



On Thursday March 14, 2019 Cyclone Idai hit central Mozambique with intense rainfall and winds up to 177 km/hour, leaving destruction across Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

One thousand people died that day, and 2.5 million people were left in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

Just six weeks later, Cyclone Kenneth battered northern Mozambique just 600 miles north of Idai's impact zone.

In the span of six weeks, two of the worst cyclones ever recorded in the southern hemisphere had devastated some of the world's poorest countries. Over 3 million people turned to the international community for help.

Oxfam supporters reached out generously, helping us launch a major humanitarian response and aid over 700,000 people.

There were huge logistical challenges facing our staff, especially reaching communities in some of the

most remote areas. But we arrived with blankets, food aid, hygiene kits, and cooking equipment.

With your donations, we installed latrines and water pumps in camps. And we helped families to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases - one of the greatest dangers after a disaster like this one.

A year on, we haven't abandoned the people of Mozambique. Our teams are still there, in the communities, still delivering the aid that you provided to the people who need it most. Helping to rebuild.

We are also focusing on addressing the inequality that impacts people living in poverty the most. We are helping protect women against gender-based violence and supporting the many women whose lack of land rights makes them more vulnerable when they return to their land.

Sadly we know that the climate crisis will bring fresh disasters to the people living here. But we will stay with them - in your name - helping them to prepare and survive.

You are there for people when they need you most.



Photo Credit: Caroline Leal / Oxfam

FIGHTING THE 'TRIPLE CRISIS' IN BANGLADESH



Over 36 million children are out of school in Bangladesh. There are nearly 200,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and over 2,000 people have died.

And yet, in this country, there are only six doctors and eight hospital beds for every 10,000 people.

The devastation continued with Cyclone Amphan - the worst cyclone ever recorded in the Bay of Bengal - ravaging the country in May.

Pankaj Anand, Director of Programs and Humanitarian response for Oxfam India, calls the situation “a triple crisis with the cyclone, COVID-19 and economic devastation completely intertwined.

Many people already had no savings left, having lost their jobs or vital remittances due to lockdown. There are now no jobs in the cities and in the villages, farms and crops have been destroyed due to the cyclone. People have nothing to fall back on.”

Renuka, a 35 year old woman in Burigoyalini, uses a hand-washing station provided by Oxfam

partner Shushilan after collecting drinking water from a distribution point.

Members of her community have also received face masks and soap from our partner.

“We do not have soap available at home, and we do not have enough water to bathe or wash our hands. We are trying hard to protect ourselves from COVID-19. Without this hand-washing facility, it would be difficult for us to stay clean.

Since Cyclone Amphan we have been hungry most of the days. If we had not received this aid, we would have starved. None of us has ever experienced anything like this before.”

As you can imagine, the situation is particularly dire in the refugee camps.

Oxfam and our partners have stepped up our work on hygiene promotion, water and sanitation facilities in the Rohingya camps in Cox’s Bazar, where 855,000 people live in extremely overcrowded conditions.

So far, working with local partners, we have reached over 230,000 people.

THE DARK SIDE OF LOCKDOWN

“My husband is a strict and rude man. These days he is always at home. He really takes it out hard on me and my children. He has made our life very difficult. Every day my children are beaten by him and he has beaten me when I stopped him from beating the children.”

In April, UN Secretary-General António Guterres spoke out against *“a horrifying global surge in domestic violence,”* and urged world leaders to include protective measures for women and children in their pandemic plans.

“Violence is not confined to the battlefield. For many women and girls, the threat looms largest where they should be safest: in their own homes,” were his words.

Oxfam has been working for years with local women’s rights organizations and networks around the globe to eliminate violence against women and girls. We are deeply grateful for our donors’ passionate commitment to fund this work.

While self-isolated in abusive relationships, women are right now facing increased physical, sexual and verbal abuse.

Economic fear turns to anger which turns to violence. And all too often wives bear the brunt of their husbands’ frustrations.

“Violence is not confined to the battlefield. For many women and girls, the threat looms largest where they should be safest: in their own homes.”



With your help and through our local partners, we have been building new community groups, enabling the eyes of the neighborhood to protect vulnerable women while the shelters can’t.

Community watches are replacing local police, and women are taught secret codes to help them report violence in pharmacies, where they frequently shop for medicine and supplies.

We are connecting women with the health and legal services that they need. And organizing 24/7 counselling services, where members and champions are actively available on their phones, tracking and monitoring cases of abuse and linking the victims with the local police and women’s helplines.

These small community efforts offer a beacon of hope to women that the world has not forgotten them. And that they have the fundamental human right to live in peace.

YOUR LEGACY GIFT WILL CHANGE LIVES

As we move from one life transition to the next on our journey, these transitions give us an opportunity to reflect on them, tend to them, and make “adjustments as required”.

This year of uncertainty and chaos we’re living through has made us all stop and reflect. During this time of reflection we’re looking inward and taking stock of who and what we hold close, our values and our legacy.

We’re looking at who and what has impacted our lives and how we’ve added value to others and the world around us, and worlds farther afield.

I have had the privilege of speaking with many of you over the past few months, as you take

stock, reflect on what lies ahead for you and your family, and how Oxfam Canada is an important part of your life’s fabric.

We’ve talked about how you’re revisiting your estate plans, and how COVID has triggered a reflection on what you currently have in place, and

Leaving a gift in your will means your values live on.



you’re making “adjustments as required”. One of them being to include Oxfam Canada to support our vital work.

If you, like many of our supporters, are reading this and your thoughts have been turning to updates you want to make in your Will, please know I am always here to answer any questions you may have.

We recommend talking it over with your family and loved ones, then speak with your lawyer and financial planner about drafting or revisiting your Will.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT ROWENA
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OXFAM DONORS WHO HAVE MADE A GIFT IN THEIR WILL

A MESSAGE FROM LINDA AND BILL

“Living and travelling in Africa introduced us to raw poverty in both rural and urban communities and established in us a belief that the most effective means of combating it was by supporting community-based initiatives that, more often than not, were managed by local women. We have supported OXFAM since the mid-1970’s because we believe that its support of projects that promote

gender justice has proved to be a successful way to overcome the poverty that persists in Africa today.”

— Linda and Bill S., Toronto, ON

A MESSAGE FROM ANN

“Having donated to Oxfam Canada for over 30 years, I know that it’s a trustworthy and highly respected organization – and one that takes a strong stance on issues affecting the poor.”

— Ann A, Toronto ON