



Oxfam

FALL 2003

Exchange

ROSS GELBSPAN ON THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE ON DEVELOPMENT

LESSONS LEARNED: FIVE YEARS AFTER HURRICANE MITCH

CULTURE AND ALPACA IN THE ANDES

THE FAST FOR A WORLD HARVEST TURNS 30!





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Making Trade Fair in Cancún

When the World Trade Organization's Fifth Ministerial Conference takes place in Mexico from September 10 to 14, Oxfam and our partners will be there advocating to make trade fair. Specifically, Oxfam will be asking for an end to:

- US dumping of agricultural commodities on international markets at prices below the cost of production—which destroys the livelihoods of farmers everywhere;
- Patent rules that deny poor countries access to affordable medicines; and
- Negotiations on other issues, such as new rules for foreign direct investment, until the WTO has first resolved the problems related to agriculture and patents.

At their last meeting in Doha, Qatar, two years ago, WTO members resolved to make trade work more effectively for poor countries. In Cancún, Oxfam will join thousands of activists and allies asking WTO members to keep those promises.

Mexico is an apt place for this discussion. Farmers there can't compete with low-priced, dumped US corn—grown with the help of US government subsidies and other assistance. Since 1994, corn prices have dropped 70 percent, affecting millions.

For more on Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign and our work in Cancún, visit our websites: www.oxfamamerica.org and www.maketradefair.com.

From Monrovia to Washington DC, Oxfam responds to the crisis in Liberia

Liberia's decade-long civil war erupted last month with street-to-street fighting and indiscriminate shelling throughout the nation's capital city, Monrovia.

Immediately, Oxfam responded with supplies and workers. Oxfam staff, 25 Liberians trained to run water and sanitation programs, have been working to provide clean water, latrines, and basic sanitation services to the thousands of displaced civilians.

The efforts of Oxfam's teams on the ground, led by program manager Sam Nagbe, are critical in the fight against a cholera epidemic that is infecting over 350 people a week, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

While Oxfam's humanitarian programs have played a key role in helping civilians, the agency's efforts to assist the Liberian people range far beyond the country's borders. Advocacy and media staff have also been at work around the clock to pressure the US government, the UN, and West African nations to bring peace through the deployment of a multinational force.

"It is time for the United States, in partnership with the UN and its members, to begin in earnest the hard, long-term work of fashioning a stable and secure Liberia," said Oxfam America President Raymond Offenheiser, advocating for US intervention in Liberia in an op-ed in *The Washington Post* last month.

Though peacekeepers are now on the ground, due in part to Oxfam's involvement, humanitarian and advocacy efforts will continue.

letters

WRITE TO US!

We welcome readers' comments and ideas. Please include your name and address and mail to:

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*Send email to
editor@oxfamamerica.org or
fax to 617-728-2596. We will
print as many letters as possible,
but reserve the right to edit for
space and clarity.*

I read a few days ago in the *International Herald Tribune* that Oxfam America has rejected funding from the US Department of Defense for its humanitarian aid project in Iraq. Bravo to Oxfam for this decision! This shows that you are truly an organization that is impartial and will not accept funds from "belligerents of either side" which have the potential to contaminate your objectivity.

Keep up the good work!

Ida Ismael
JAKARTA, INDONESIA

*For an update on Oxfam's work in
Iraq, see page 14.*

A letter in the Spring 2003 *Exchange* worries about Oxfam drifting into "politics." I'm not exactly sure what he means, but for my part the great, and almost unique thing about Oxfam among humanitarian organizations—including major ones like UNICEF—is that it is concerned with and talks about the underlying causes of the humanitarian problems it is trying to ameliorate. You have some excellent articles on topics rarely discussed elsewhere. Keep it up.

Robert Wasserman
EAST LANSING, MI



Oxfam in Your Backyard Ordinary People, Extraordinary Support

The Fight Against Hunger: Not Just For Adults!

When it comes to fighting poverty and hunger, some people get an earlier start than others. Consider six-year-old Aidan Regan of Boise, Idaho, who decided to take action after seeing a news story about how the famine in Ethiopia was affecting children. In addition to donating his hard-earned savings, Aidan educated his neighbors by going door-to-door and passing out *Fast for a World Harvest* brochures. Aidan asked his neighbors to skip a meal and donate the money they would have spent on food to Oxfam's relief work in Ethiopia. In all, Aidan distributed 51 *Fast* brochures and collected more than \$300 for Oxfam—all this before he begins first grade! Aidan, don't forget to send us your resume in about 20 years!

Was Oxfam in your backyard? Send your story to Melanie Moore at mmoore@oxfamamerica.org, or call 617-728-2464.

Ethiopia: The Rains That Weep

The seasonal rains have arrived in Ethiopia, and much of the countryside is covered with lush green vegetation. But the promise of a good harvest has a cruel edge: it's too late. Ethiopia is facing a "green famine," where families starve while they wait for their crops to grow. In the words of an Ethiopian farmer, these are "the rains that weep after killing us."*

The recent drought that ruined two harvests in much of the country has left over 12 million people unable to feed themselves, and the global crash in coffee prices has brought hunger to regions previously considered food-secure.

Food emergencies not only cause enormous suffering in the short run; they also set the stage for future food emergencies by compromising the health of people and livestock and by inflicting damage on the environment. When crops fail, for example, farmers turn to making charcoal as a way to raise money to feed their families. The resulting deforestation causes soil erosion and other environmental damage that reduce the land's capacity to support agriculture.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF STARVATION

Oxfam America's programs are designed to break the cycle of starvation and to help create long-term food security in Ethiopia. In addition to distributing urgently-needed food supplies, Oxfam is:

- Introducing alternative crops and livestock—such as camels—that are able to withstand drought;
- Funding water projects, including irrigation and the rehabilitation of traditional water sources;
- Providing microcredit programs to assist vulnerable populations, such as female heads of households and ethnic minorities;
- Building grain storage facilities to help stabilize food supplies and prices; and
- Bringing together local, national, and international organizations to address the root causes of famine and hunger in Ethiopia.

Not all the work of restoring Ethiopia's capacity to feed itself lies within the country's borders. There is much that consumers and activists from around the world can do to ensure that Ethiopian farmers and coffee growers get access to markets and fair prices for their goods. To learn more about Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign, please visit our web site at www.oxfamamerica.org.

Many thanks to all who have supported Oxfam's work in Ethiopia. To donate to our ongoing efforts, visit www.oxfamamerica.org and click "DONATE."

* From the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs report on the assessment mission of May 24-26, 2003

ROSS GELBSPAN:

A CHALLENGING CLIMATE FOR OXFAM

Ross Gelbspan is author of *The Heat Is On: the Climate Crisis, the Cover-Up, the Prescription* (Perseus Books, 1998). For 31 years, he was an editor and reporter at *The Philadelphia Bulletin*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Boston Globe*. At *the Globe*, he conceived and edited a series of articles that won a Pulitzer Prize in 1984.

Visit www.heatisonline.org to read more about the climate crisis, including a recent history of extreme weather events, major scientific findings about climate change, and a proposed solution to stabilize the climate and expand overall wealth in the global economy.

Oxfam's struggle for social and economic justice is about to become more stressful and less predictable. The reason: the increasingly rapid rate of change of the global climate.

Climate change has huge implications for security and terrorism, for diplomatic distortions, for the viability of the global economy—and ultimately for equity.

It also contains enormous opportunities for developing countries.

Oxfam invites outside writers to contribute to this column to promote discussion and new ways of thinking. The opinions expressed are those of the author. To suggest a column idea, email editor@oxfamamerica.org.

Climate impacts hit the world's poor hardest because developing countries cannot afford strong enough infrastructures to withstand increasingly frequent and more disruptive natural disasters. In 2001, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a UN agency representing more than 2,000 scientists from 100 countries, stressed that poor countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are most vulnerable to the devastating droughts, floods, heat waves, violent storms, and warming-driven spread of infectious diseases that mark the early stages of global warming. In just the first half of 2003, for example:

- In Lesotho, early rains, untimely frost, and severe storms destroyed crops and contributed to unusual famine conditions.
- In mid-January, an unusual four-week cold snap killed more than 1,300 people in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.
- In early May, an intense heat wave triggered fires in northern Mexico that consumed nearly 400,000 acres of land.

This instability will only intensify as carbon dioxide from cars, power plants, homes, and factories continues to trap heat inside the atmosphere. Concentrations of atmospheric carbon today are unprecedented in the last 420,000 years. That guarantees other ominous and perhaps irreversible disruptions:

- In mountain villages in Bolivia, the rapid melting of glaciers is depriving farmers of water for irrigation and jeopardizing drinking water supplies.
- In the Pacific, rising sea levels are prompting plans to relocate the populations of Tuvalu and other island nations.
- In Mexico and Colombia, mosquitoes, traditionally unable to survive above 1,000 meters because of colder temperatures, are now spreading malaria and dengue fever to communities as high as 2,200 meters in Columbia, as warming temperatures expand their range.

Relief agencies need to recognize that traditional “100 year floods” are becoming annual events. Food supplies are vulnerable to longer droughts, fires, and insect attacks. Scientists project a 30 percent decline in the yields of wheat, rice, and maize in developing countries, and a dramatic increase in crop-destroying and disease-spreading insects.

But the climate crisis also holds profound opportunities for Oxfam and other development-based NGOs.

The science is unambiguous: the solution to climate change requires a 70 percent reduction in carbon fuel use worldwide—which translates into a global transition to clean energy sources—solar, wind, biomass, and hydrogen fuels.

That challenge is already being addressed in Europe. Holland plans to cut carbon emissions by 80 percent in 40 years. Tony Blair just pledged to cut emissions in the U.K. by 60 percent in 50 years. And Germany has committed to cuts of 50 percent in 50 years.

But even if the countries of the North cut their emissions dramatically, those cuts would be overwhelmed by carbon emissions from India, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and all other countries who depend on their fossil fuel resources.

The implications for development are profound. Energy investments in poor countries create far more wealth than equivalent investments in other sectors. A properly structured plan to provide clean energy to developing countries would create millions of jobs and raise living standards even as it slowed climate change. It would allow poor countries to grow without regard to atmospheric limits and, in many cases, without the budgetary burden of imported oil. In the long run, it would help turn impoverished countries into robust trading

partners. (For one possible global strategy, see: “Toward A Real Kyoto Protocol” at www.heatisonline.org.)

Finally, climate change is no longer a science issue. Nor is it the exclusive franchise of environmental groups. It represents a titanic clash of interests. The real solution to global warming threatens the survival of the world's oil and coal industries which, taken together, constitute the biggest commercial enterprise in history.

The problem will be addressed only when there is a broad coalition of groups cooperating politically to force a global transition to clean energy. That coalition could include groups involved in international development and relief, environment, campaign finance reform, corporate accountability, public health, labor, environmental justice, and human rights—in addition to the religious community which is especially responsive to the moral dimensions of the climate crisis.

The bad news is that we have a very short time in which to fend off very serious disruptions. According to one study, the world needs to be getting half its energy from non-carbon sources by 2018 to avoid a catastrophic buildup of atmospheric carbon later in this century.

The good news is that a solution to the climate crisis provides a common umbrella for many constituencies to come together in a mutual campaign to further their individual goals.

The outcome would be a dramatic expansion in the overall wealth and equity of the global economy.

The alternative would render all the work of Oxfam and its partner groups around the world ultimately irrelevant.

Relief agencies need to recognize that traditional “100 year floods” are becoming annual events.



SEAN SPRAGUE/OXFAM

MITCH + 5

Five years after Hurricane Mitch leveled Central America, Oxfam partners are training communities to prepare for the worst. The experience of Mitch caught thousands of people unaware—and changed the way Oxfam does business.

by Kevin Pepper

Above: María Felipe Pérez (center) and her four children in Santa Inés, Guatemala. After Hurricane Mitch, Oxfam supported the members of her community by providing land, seeds, and tools to grow crops.

In 1998, Category Five Hurricane Mitch unleashed 180 MPH winds and deposited more than six feet of rain on Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador, killing almost 9,000 people and leaving more than 700,000 homeless. Schools, bridges, water systems, and roads were destroyed in one of the most destructive hurricanes in history.

Throughout Central America, people were living in conditions that made them especially vulnerable to the storm—in houses made of sticks, mud,

and grass and on eroded land stripped of trees and topsoil. Those in remote regions, without access to televisions, newspapers, and radios, were the last to receive warnings.

Oxfam provided emergency supplies, repaired water and sanitation systems, and reconstructed housing, saving countless lives. But the damage was extensive. Oxfam partners saw thousands of lives and years of development work swept away.

A MODEL FOR SURVIVAL

Amidst Mitch's vast destruction, Oxfam learned critical lessons from one community's remarkable survival. The first night of the storm, while rapid flood waters climbed to over 10 feet, Oxfam partner, the Foundation for Cooperation and Rural Development (CORDES), evacuated villagers in the lower Lempa region of El Salvador. CORDES selected high altitude evacuation routes and divided villagers into groups to manage medical attention, food, water, and shelter. Out of harm's way, community members met every day to evaluate work and plan ahead.

Thanks to CORDES, not one person from the region died in the hurricane.

This Salvadoran community's ability to organize quickly and escape danger stimulated Oxfam to rethink our strategy in the face of natural disasters—ultimately shifting our focus from disaster response to disaster preparedness and prevention.

THE POWER OF PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION

During a disaster, people shouldn't be deciding what to do. Lower Lempa demonstrated that communities have a chance of survival when people are well-organized and imbued with a sense of responsibility. Oxfam prioritizes the need for communities to organize, train, and prepare before disasters occur.

Over the last five years, Oxfam has helped hundreds of Central American communities develop early alert and risk management systems. Today, villages know how to gauge rainfall levels to determine when to flee to higher ground, and have marked evacuation routes. Designated community members are trained to lead in emergencies.

With Oxfam support, the Salvadoran Foundation for Reconstruction and Development (REDES) purchased Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment and radios that can detect

dangerous weather systems up to two weeks before they strike. Villages have radio towers that can reach even the most isolated communities.

THE INGREDIENTS OF RAPID RESPONSE

Though communities may be prepared, disasters *will* occur. At these times, Oxfam's partner network is extremely valuable.

Most lives are lost within 15 days following a disaster. To move effectively during this period demands a dependable and flexible network of allies. On familiar ground, Oxfam partners work in ways outside agencies cannot. Respecting local cultures, partner organizations recognize communities are best prepared when they can develop and implement solutions themselves, rather than waiting for outside aide.

"When people have an active role in responding to their situation, it builds their self-confidence," explains Oscar Andrade, Oxfam America's Program Officer for Humanitarian Assistance for Central America. "We'll help, but we won't do everything for them. They need to be an integral part of the solution."

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN DISASTER AND DEVELOPMENT

Planning, technology, and rapid response can go a long way toward helping communities survive disaster. But Oxfam recognizes greater opportunity for preparedness: namely, the opportunity to integrate disaster relief and development.

"We have the technology to prevent much of the destruction that now follows most natural hazards," humanitarian response thought leader Frederick Cuny asserts in his seminal book, *Disasters and Development*. "But to do this requires development: stronger housing, better agriculture, a more

diversified economy, and more responsive governments."

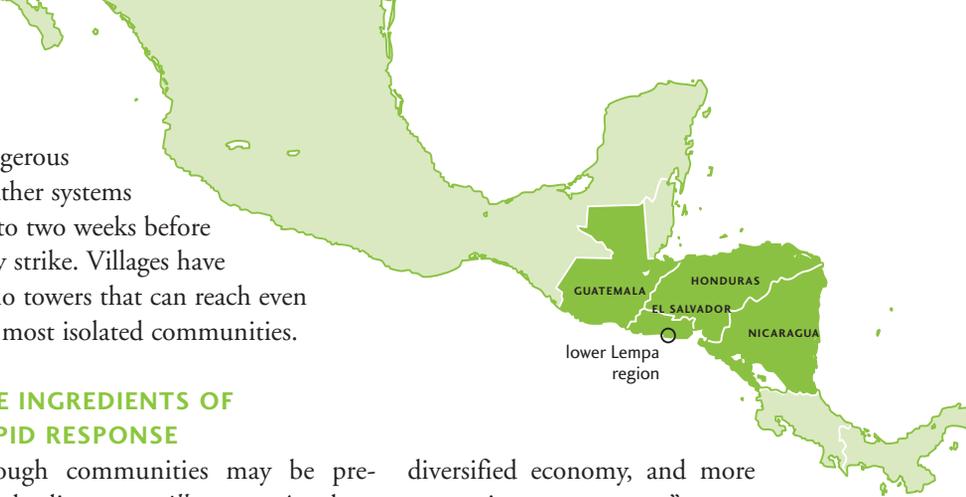
Because Oxfam partners work on both disaster relief and development, they are able to pursue developmental solutions that are mindful of potential natural hazards. By the same token, as they help communities rebuild after a disaster, they can seek solutions that will meet long-term developmental needs. For example:

- In Nicaragua and Honduras, people are adjusting their crop cycles and planting crop variations that can better withstand hurricane weather.
- In El Salvador, communities are clearing rivers of debris—a practice that prevents flood damage and allows an extra cycle of planting for extra income.
- Also in El Salvador, people are building grain silos on raised ground. If the stored grain isn't needed for emergencies, it can be sold in the off-season for higher prices.

Such combinations of disaster preparedness and prevention and long-term development strategies are strengthening communities throughout Central America.

As the rainy season approaches, meteorologists have predicted at least two hurricane systems will develop in Central America this year. No doubt, they will come with the same might they have wielded for generations.

Except this time around, people will be prepared.



JUST WHAT IS THE FAST?

by Cynthia Phoel

For some, it's a plate of rice at an Oxfam Hunger Banquet and a momentary glimpse into a world hard to imagine. For others, it's as essential to Thanksgiving as family, turkey, and pumpkin pie. For still others, the Fast is synonymous with Oxfam.

Thirty years ago, on the Thursday before Thanksgiving, thousands of people nationwide fasted for the day or skipped a meal, donating their food money to Oxfam America. So began Oxfam's *Fast for a World Harvest* campaign.

Since then, Oxfam's fight against hunger has passed through the hearts and minds of more than a million people—and been shaped and molded by those it has touched. In the process, the *Fast* has raised more than \$10 million for Oxfam's work around the world.

Just what is the *Fast*, you ask?



"I'm a food-obsessed person," Stephen Land confesses. "The idea that people don't have enough to eat probably resonates more with me because I love food so much."

Thirty years ago, that question might have had a simple answer. Today, the answer is as complex—and wonderful—as the people who carry it forth.

SCIENCE FOR STEPHEN

Stephen Land has the *Fast* down to a science. "I do a 24-hour fast," Land explains. "About a month before the *Fast*, I send out a letter to a group of loyal friends telling them I'm doing the *Fast*. It's the most targeted mailing list you ever saw. I send to maybe 100 people, of whom 80 will respond."

Clearly, Land has had some practice—30 years of practice, in fact. Land was a 19-year-old Harvard student when he came across literature for the first *Fast for a World Harvest*. He's been hooked on Oxfam—and the *Fast*—ever since.

Over the years, Land has initiated a variety of *Fast* events, including a "break the fast" breakfast tradition at his church. "I haven't had anything to do with it for 20 years, but I'm pleased to say, they still observe the *Fast* every year."

A lawyer in Manhattan, Land is gratified by his association with Oxfam. "It is so easy for us, making trivial sacrifices that are meaningless to us, to make profound differences in the lives of other people... I know that whatever I'm being asked to

give up is stuff I would spend completely frivolously, because here in this country, we have vastly more than we need."

MAGIC FOR HARRY

Harry Shipps was eight years old when he attended his first Oxfam Hunger Banquet. In a large banquet hall, Harry and his parents were cast into the lowest income group and received little to eat for dinner. Harry was spellbound.

On the car ride home, he hatched a plan. "I kind of felt like...we should try to do something about it, and my parents backed me up on that. So we decided to eat rice and beans one night a week. The money we saved, we would donate to Oxfam."

The Shipps followed through, collecting money in a jar for Oxfam. While raising money was important to Harry, eating rice and beans was critical to the plan. "You're actually doing something that connects you...with the people who will be helped by the money you are raising," Harry says.

Five years later, Harry and his mother, Debbie, are monthly pledge partners. Though the rice and beans have tapered off, Harry's Hunger Banquet experience has stayed with him. His father, Steve, observes, "I think Harry



Of his family's rice-and-beans dinners, Harry Shipps admits, "It wasn't the tastiest dinner I ever had, but it shouldn't have been, really, for what we were doing."

For Phyllis Sweet, "giving back to the community was an expression of gratitude, my way of saying 'thank you for saving my life.'"

has a real pride that he has some sense...of how the world works. I think he values that in himself. And we sure value it in him."

Living in a modest home in the well-to-do town of West Newbury, MA, Steve points out, "It would be easy for Harry to think of himself as poor in this town." That Harry knows otherwise is part of his charm.

CHANGE FOR PHYLLIS

Phyllis Sweet had lived a lot of life by the time she returned to college at age 32. The mother of four and a recovered drug addict, she had known hunger and homelessness firsthand. Sweet's chance experience at an Oxfam Hunger Banquet had real immediacy for her. "I began to realize I was right where I was supposed to be," Sweet says.

Before the banquet, Sweet had already begun counseling other women recovering from addiction who were considering returning to school. Over time, her community activities expanded. "I became involved in issues because they directly affected my life or the lives around me, such as welfare reform and poverty."

But the Hunger Banquet marked a turning point for Sweet. "I heard my own story that night," she explains. Afterward, Sweet began to see her past not as a source of pain, but of inspiration. "I returned to my campus motivated and committed to share with others what I had learned."

In 2002, Sweet was accepted into Oxfam's CHANGE Initiative, a program offering college students leadership training and in-depth exposure to global development issues. As a CHANGE leader at Arizona's Glendale Community College, Sweet hosted the college's first Hunger and Homelessness Week—including a Hunger Banquet of her own.

AND FOR YOU?

Find out by joining us in celebrating the 30th anniversary of the *Fast*. Participating in the *Fast* can be as simple as skipping a meal in recognition of world hunger. Or, you may choose to organize a special *Fast* event.

Visit www.oxfamamerica.org/fast, email fast@oxfamamerica.org, or call **800/597-FAST** today.

Let Oxfam help you get started. Then take the *Fast* and make it your own.

WHAT IS A HUNGER BANQUET?

In this popular *Fast* event, guests are divided into high-, middle-, and low-income groups according to global demographics and served corresponding meals, with the low-income group—55 percent of the population—sitting on the floor around communal servings of rice. During the narrated banquet, as factories are opened and closed, jobs are lost and found, and profit margins escalate, people may move from one group to another. At the end of the meal, most of the guests walk away hungry.

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD: EMBRACING CULTURE AND TRADITION IN THE ANDES

by Chris Hufstader

The exhilarating beauty of the Andes mountains of Ayacucho, Peru, might cause one to overlook the severe poverty of the indigenous Quechua people living in the highest communities. The views are tremendous. Rocky, treeless hills stretch into the distance. Llamas and alpaca feed leisurely on grassy pastures. Clouds and mist move in and out of the peaks and rocks.



Estaban Palomino Tacas, a 24-year-old alpaca farmer, reports that growing better pasture grasses has improved the health of his alpaca, and he is getting a better price for their wool.

But make no mistake: living in these mountains is difficult. The many small communities at over 12,000 feet rely on raising llamas and alpacas and growing potatoes. Many have no electricity, telephones, or running water. Most people are illiterate, and only a few have attended primary school. Apart from raising animals, there are limited opportunities for work. The climate is harsh. In the dry season, pasture grasses wither, and animals are malnourished. In the wet season, poisonous plants flourish, further endangering the valuable herds.

As if these challenges aren't enough, centuries of ethnic discrimination and isolation have conditioned people to believe their traditional ways of working are backward. Buying into negative images of their culture, the Quechua people have been made to feel inferior.

Urbano Muñoz, director of Oxfam partner, Association for the Promotion of Development (PRODES), grew up in this region. Muñoz believes that building pride in Quechua culture is essential to helping communities overcome poverty. "If we only work with the material and technical aspects of these projects, then it is not complete," he explains. "It has to be integrated with the spiritual aspects of Andean life."



PRODES Director Urbano Muñoz is promoting indigenous culture as part of the organization's work to overcome poverty in the mountains of Ayacucho, Peru.

IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS

The technical aspects of PRODES' work are easy to grasp. PRODES staff helps communities build corrals in which they plant special grass seed to grow more nutritious pasture for their livestock. When animals need to gain weight, they are put in these corrals to fatten up. PRODES teaches families how to produce and sell charqui, dried alpaca meat, valued for its taste and low cholesterol. They also train people in processing alpaca wool and weaving goods they can sell in local markets.

These measures add up to real improvements in income. People are eating and dressing better. According to Estaban Palomino Tacas, a 24-year-old alpaca farmer, the improved pasture makes a significant difference for his animals. "The animals are fatter now, and the wool is softer and smoother. We get



ELISA MATURANA/OXFAM AMERICA

Re-affirming Quechua culture fosters pride in traditional ways of living and working and builds strong communities for the future.

four soles [about a dollar] more per pound for this better-quality wool. I only have five alpacas and five llamas, so this improved quality makes a big difference.” Others report they have doubled the price they get for charqui since they improved their processing.

BEYOND SEEDS AND TOOLS

The cultural aspects of PRODES’ work feed into these activities. Many ancient indigenous practices are well suited for their rugged environment, including those of community organizing, managing water sources, and rotating herds to avoid overgrazing. PRODES helps communities reinvigorate interest in these traditional practices and build respect for themselves and their culture. PRODES staff encourages the farmers to remember their cultural roots, which stress reciprocity. Today, community

members help each other build corrals, rotate herds, and help provide for sick and elderly community members.

The three years that Oxfam has been funding PRODES’ work have witnessed a definite sense of progress. Many families have only just finished their corrals, but their commitment to their work and pride in their culture is strong, and they are enthusiastic in showing visitors their accomplishments. “Thanks to this project over the last three years, the communities have better self-esteem and they feel proud,” Muñoz says. “They no longer see themselves as inferior to people from other areas.”

This following fable is taken from a collection published by PRODES to promote Quechua culture and values.

The Potato Worm

A man had grown potatoes on several hectares of land. This man had an aged mother who lived alone. At harvest time, the old woman went to her son, who saw her coming, and said: “This old lady is coming to ask me for potatoes. Hide me, and tell her I am not home if she asks for me.”

His workers hid him among the potatoes, covering him with dried grasses, while the woman approached, asking: “Is my boy Emilito here? I want him to give me some potatoes.”

The workers answered, “Emilito has gone.” The old lady waited, but seeing that he did not return, she left.

After her departure, the workers called to Emilito saying, “Your mother has left—you can come out now.” But he did not emerge from the pile. They shouted louder, and when he still did not appear, they wondered if he had fallen asleep and went to search for him among the potatoes.

To their horror, they discovered that, instead of Emilito, there were hundreds of worms eating the potatoes.

In this way, a man who refused to give potatoes to his hungry mother was converted into a worm. Since then, the potato worm has lived to threaten the abundance of Andean farmers.

—Translated by Thea Gelbspan



SIMON BILLENNESS/OXFAM AMERICA

Farmworkers and supporters demonstrate outside Yum! company gates.

Yum! Shareholders Vote for Farmworkers

On May 15th, 39 percent of Yum! Brands shareholders supported a resolution calling for sustainable wages for farmworkers who pick tomatoes for Taco Bell suppliers. Yum!, a large fast food corporation, is the parent company of Taco Bell.

The pay a farmworker receives for a tub of tomatoes—42 cents for a 32-pound tub—hasn't changed in 25 years. In real terms, this means a 60 percent drop in earnings, making farmworkers the lowest wage earners in the US.

The resounding vote marks a major victory for Oxfam America and its partners—especially the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which has targeted Taco Bell as a major purchaser of Florida tomatoes. Yum! has long denied responsibility for labor rights abuses by its suppliers.

The vote followed a presentation to shareholders by Oxfam staffers Minor Sinclair and Simon Billenness, detailing farmworker exploitation and urging Yum! to establish a supplier code of conduct to ensure basic labor standards and living wages.

Since the resolution, Yum! has continued talks with the coalition to find a solution. So far, no agreements have been reached.

In April, the *New Yorker* featured the coalition in an article by John Bove entitled, “Nobodies: Does slavery exist in America?” The coalition has helped facilitate the discovery and prosecution of five modern-day slavery cases in South Florida in the past five years.

Read more about Oxfam's work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers at www.oxfamamerica.org/ciw.

Report from Iraq

Oxfam has been hard at work in and around Iraq since the outbreak of war. In Baghdad, we have been working with the All Our Children consortium of non-governmental organizations to supply pediatric hospitals and impoverished clinics with food, beds, hygiene supplies, and medical equipment. We have also been providing vulnerable children—such as those living apart from their parents—with access to medical care, relief supplies, and the means to be reunited with their families.

Decades of work on the ground during humanitarian disasters have taught us that contaminated water supplies can be as deadly as bombs and bullets. Our main focus in Iraq is restoring clean water and sanitation to as many people as we can reach. Oxfam water engineers are working in central and southern Iraq to repair pipes, pumping stations, water treatment plants, specialized vehicles, and laboratories. By carefully targeting our resources and working closely with local partners, Oxfam has been able to improve the water supplies to hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

You know how *you* feel after you've been in the car for a long ride. How about that tomato that's been on the truck for 5,000 miles?

Right now, the very best produce is right in your neighborhood. The freshest, tastiest squash, potatoes, tomatoes, and apples are just down the road.

Visit your local apple orchard, pumpkin patch, or farmer's market. Or look for signs in your grocery store that advertise locally-produced foods.

For specific information on places to buy local produce in your area, visit www.foodroutes.org.

Eat well! And make trade fair one tomato at a time.





STEVE CRISE/JEOPARDY! PRODUCTIONS, INC.

Actress Lauren Graham, from the WB's *Gilmore Girls*, recently played *Celebrity Jeopardy!* for Oxfam America. Just as intelligent in real life as her character on the critically-acclaimed television show, Ms. Graham won \$26,000 for Oxfam.

Thank you, Lauren Graham!



Real estate? Real support!

If you are an Oxfam supporter in a position to donate real estate to Oxfam, you have the option to:

- Deed the entire property to Oxfam;
- Give a percentage of your property;
- Fund a trust using the property as principle; or
- Donate your house and continue to live in it.

Depending on the option you choose, you may receive a charitable deduction and/or tax benefits for your donation.

For more information on donating real estate, contact Oxfam's Cyndy Viveiros at **1-800-776-9326 ext. 494** or cviveiros@oxfamamerica.org.



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