



Oxfam
America



Oxfam America in South America

To their government officials and to the corporations who want to exploit their lands and natural resources, the indigenous and rural people of South America have a simple, yet important message: **“We are here.”**

Since 1984, Oxfam America has helped them voice this message in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru—by strengthening farmers’ organizations, women’s groups, and indigenous associations that represent poor communities. With a stronger voice and the right skills, indigenous and rural people can manage their lands, promote their rights and cultures—and build a better, more prosperous future.

Empowering Indigenous and Rural Communities

The farmers and indigenous people of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru are the poorest and most politically disconnected people in these countries. They are most likely to be illiterate,

without clean water or health care, and at risk of losing their lands to corporate interests.

Oxfam funds projects that help indigenous and peasant organizations effectively advocate for their rights—for better services and a say in how their lands are used.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

NEW LAWS PROTECT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN BOLIVIA

REGION: Monte Verde, Bolivian Amazon

PARTNER ORGANIZATION: Collective for Applied Studies on Social Development (CEADES)

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS AND RURAL PEOPLE

“Indigenous people have a strong history of organization, culture, and sense of identity. This has helped them survive, despite discrimination and poverty. It is essential for us to work with them, in ways designed by the people themselves, using their own traditions and technology to achieve the greatest potential.”

—Igidio Naveda, Oxfam America Senior Program Officer and indigenous person from the highlands of Peru

What is Oxfam?

Oxfam America is a non-profit organization that works to end global poverty. Independent and experienced, Oxfam responds to humanitarian emergencies, provides grants and technical assistance to local community groups, and campaigns for policies that expand opportunities for poor people. Oxfam's work to help communities find solutions to

their poverty informs our policy and advocacy efforts, bringing the reality on the ground to an international stage.

Oxfam America is a member of **Oxfam International**—a confederation of 12 Oxfam affiliates—working with 3,000 local groups in more than 100 countries on long-term development projects. Oxfam International

members also collaborate on global advocacy efforts at the United Nations, European Union, G8, and World Trade Organization.

When conflict and natural disasters strike, Oxfam International affiliates are ready to respond quickly, channeling funds, aid workers, and relief supplies to where they are needed in a matter of hours.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Oxfam America raises more than 90 percent of program funds from individuals and institutions, such as foundations.

To maintain our independence, Oxfam America does not accept funds from the United States government or from corporations working in industries that are the subject of our advocacy and campaign programs.

For more detailed financial information visit Oxfam America's web site:

... English: www.oxfamamerica.org

... Español: www.oxfamamerica.org/es



Eriberto Castrejon, a farmer and leader of an agricultural community in Cajamarca, Peru, organizes local efforts to protect the environment.

THE CHALLENGE: Chiquitano people need to protect their ancestral territories from irresponsible exploitation of their oil, gas, and forest resources.

SOLUTION: A citizen's movement to promote respect for indigenous rights. With funding from Oxfam, CEADES is conducting advocacy training for indigenous organizations, and created a national commission that is discussing environmental and indigenous rights with the government. These efforts have resulted in a new law that guarantees indigenous communities the right to be consulted and to a share of revenues from natural gas and oil projects. CEADES is now promoting similar laws and regulations governing the mining and logging industries.

Protecting the Environment and Natural Resources

Indigenous and rural communities are more likely to depend on environmentally fragile lands for food and income. They face daily struggles to maintain the viability of their farms and provide for their families.

Oxfam helps indigenous communities gain legal title to their territory so they can control how it is used and responsibly manage their land and water resources. Activities include legal and technical training for land titling, forestry and water management, sustainable agriculture, and monitoring of mining and oil operations.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE INCREASES YIELD—AND INCOME

REGION: Imbabura, Ecuador

PARTNER ORGANIZATION: Center for Pluricultural Studies (CEPCU)

THE CHALLENGE: Indigenous people living for centuries in environmentally sensitive areas have developed sustainable ways of living and farming. These techniques, as well as their indigenous culture, are slipping away as farmers try to compete in the global economy. They want to respect their culture, protect their resources, and improve their agricultural production.

THE SOLUTION: Since 1999, Oxfam funds have been helping CEPCU assist indigenous communities



INDIGENOUS AND RURAL POVERTY

| | BOLIVIA | ECUADOR | PERU |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Population | 8.8 m | 13 m | 27 m |
| Indigenous Population* | 70% | 34% | 42% |
| GDP per capita | \$960 | \$2,180 | \$2,360 |
| Population living in poverty (< \$2/day) | 48% | 41% | 50% |
| Indigenous population living in poverty (< \$2/day)* | 64% | N/A | 79% |

*The indigenous people of Latin America generally are not counted properly in government surveys—another indication of their exclusion. In the case of Ecuador, no data is available for the indigenous population living in poverty.

Sources: UN, World Bank, Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía.

to improve farm production by revitalizing their culture and traditional agricultural practices. The program includes organizing and training people to protect their pastures, lakes, and forests. CEPCU also trains villagers to grow organic vegetables to increase their income and improve nutrition. The project is now helping over 3,000 people in 21 communities.

Improving Emergency Response

Poor people suffer the most in natural disasters. Their modest homes cannot withstand floods or earthquakes, they often lack communication systems for early warning, and they have few resources with which to recover.

Oxfam provides emergency aid when it is needed in a crisis and helps communities to analyze risks and reduce vulnerability before disaster strikes. Since starting work in this program area, Oxfam has assisted 49 communities recovering from earthquakes, floods, and intense cold weather. We've also helped 16 communities to develop disaster prevention and evacuation plans.

PROJECT EXAMPLE

HIGHLAND COMMUNITIES REDUCE RISK OF DISASTERS

REGION: Southern Peru Highlands

PARTNER ORGANIZATION: Proyección

THE CHALLENGE: In 2004, southern Peru highland communities were hit by record snowfall and severe cold, which killed their livestock and crops. They needed immediate assistance to survive, save as many of their animals as possible, and develop ways to cope with similar threats in the future.

THE SOLUTION: Oxfam and Proyección provided food and blankets for farmers and veterinary services for their alpacas, llamas, and cows. The following summer, farmers learned how to use new seeds designed to produce a stronger variety of barley for a dependable supply of winter food for their livestock. Their communities are now organized with risk management committees trained to anticipate and prepare for severe weather and other threats.



A BETTER LIFE IN ECUADOR

When María Paralta prepares dinner, she serves corn, potatoes, guinea pig, and vegetable soup garnished with aromatic herbs. These are just a few of the 50 products she grows and sells from her own farm, made possible by her hard work and support from Oxfam's partner CEPCU. "It's a real privilege to participate in this project," María said. "It has brought us food, better nutrition, and money to pay for education for our children." Four of María's six children have attended school. The oldest, Rosita, is going to university (the first in her family to do so). Rosita also works for CEPCU, helping to bring the same program that helped her family to others.



Together, we can end poverty.

“I want to say thank you to Oxfam America. You have been with us and the Amazon Defense Front, supporting us financially but also with ideas. You know that with the economic needs here, we just don’t have the resources to do this important work. Thank you for being such good friends and companions and for joining together with us.”

—María Ana Jiménez, at a meeting for communities affected by oil drilling, organized by the Amazon Defense Front, Lago Agrio, Ecuador

We call it *acompañamiento*, a word that describes how Oxfam works with our partners. We identify the most promising local organizations—those best positioned to create lasting local solutions to poverty—and provide them with the support they need to thrive. In addition to funding, Oxfam provides technical advice, networking opportunities with liked-minded organizations, training, and legal assistance.

In all cases, we help organizations assert the rights of women. This involves educating and engaging both men and women, which is fundamental to raising communities out of poverty.

In the end, our partners are more effective, and more capable of realizing their visions for a better future.



Oxfam America is committed to creating lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and social injustice.

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