

THE POWER OF RESILIENCE

ALSO INSIDE:

A FORCE OF PEACE IN PERU

REBUILDING IN BANGLADESH

OXFAM AMERICA'S NEW ROLE IN DARFUR

Dear Friends,

Greetings! Memorial Day marks the start of summer for many Americans, but—as I write—it is still very much a New England spring here. The lilacs' fragrant blooms have come and gone, but the temperatures have slipped back into the 40s several nights recently, and this morning I woke to a cold, steady rainfall.

Like most people, I have come to rely on the patterns of my local climate, even if in New England our springs are predictable in their unpredictability. Elsewhere, the erratic character of climate change is jeopardizing peoples' lives and well-being, and that's precisely why Oxfam is speaking out on an issue regarded by most as an environmental one.

We believe climate change is more than an environmental concern. We believe curbing global warming isn't enough. We must go beyond that if we're going to help poor communities—from the US Gulf Coast to Bangladesh—build their resilience to climate change. The situation is increasingly urgent; many are already struggling to cope with the consequences of erratic weather, crop shortages, and receding coastlines. Naturally it is the world's poorest—among them women and children—who are hit hardest.

With some champions in Congress and support from the White House, we're hoping to see domestic legislation that not only fines companies who pollute, but also uses some of these funds to help affected communities build their resilience. If we are successful domestically, we can lay the groundwork for a global deal at the UN Climate Change Conference this December—an agreement that will create a more hospitable climate for us all.

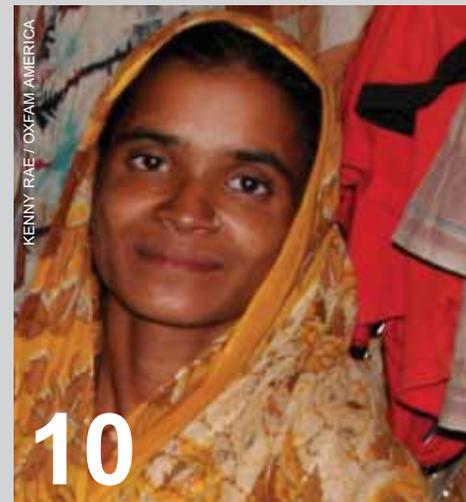
Sincerely,

Raymond C. Offenheiser
President, Oxfam America



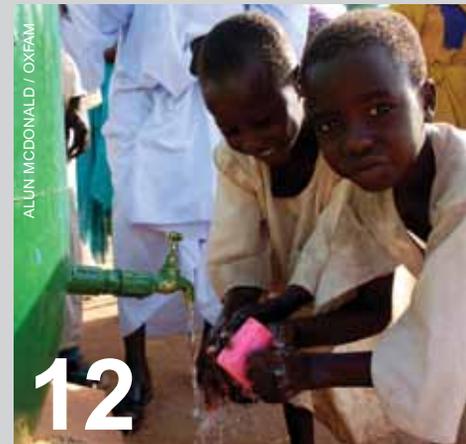
4

JESSICA ERICKSON / OXFAM AMERICA



10

KENNY RAE / OXFAM AMERICA



12

ALUN MCDONALD / OXFAM

CONTENTS

VOLUME 9, ISSUE II

Women and climate change	2
A force of peace Mining in Peru	4
Right to Know, Right to Decide campaign update	8
Coming home again: Rebuilding in Bangladesh	10
Growing in Darfur: Oxfam America's new role	13

OXFAMExchange Spring 2009

Jane F. Huber
Editor
Chris Hufstader, Anna Kramer,
Coco McCabe, Andrea Perera,
Writers
Jessica Erickson
Designer
Carl M. Soares
Production coordinator
Deanna Miller
Proofreader
Diane Shohet
Director of communications

Board of directors

Janet A. McKinley
Chair
Raymond C. Offenheiser
President
Elizabeth Becker
Brizio N. Biondi-Morra
L. David Brown
Michael Carter
Rosalind Conway
David Doniger
James Down
Jonathan A. Fox

Bennett Freeman
Barry D. Gaberman
Joe H. Hamilton
Shigeki Makino
Minh Chau Nguyen
Steven Reiss
Kitt Sawitsky
Wendy Sherman
Janet Van Zandt
Roger Widmann

ABOVE (clockwise from left): In the mountains high above Cajamarca, Peru, Father Marco Arana takes in the view of the massive Yanacocha Gold Mine from a potato field. | These children in Um Dukhun in West Darfur were among the more than 1,500 people who participated in Global Hand Washing Day. Oxfam organized events throughout Darfur as part of a public health education campaign. | Sarina lost her home in Padma, Bangladesh, to Cyclone Sidr. (Read her story on pp 10–11.) **COVER:** Erratic rainfall in Bangladesh has forced Razia and her family to move six times in three years. Their home and crops destroyed, Razia's husband now works as a day laborer picking chilies that she dries.

We welcome your feedback. Please direct letters to editor@oxfamamerica.org or Editor, OXFAMExchange, 226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor, Boston MA 02114-2206.

Check out Oxfam's blog! Go to <http://blogs.oxfamamerica.org>.

In her lifetime, 10-year-old Elisabeth has already witnessed glacial retreat.

Elisabeth's community, and others, in the Peruvian Andes face dwindling water supplies. Though they are least responsible for causing climate change, poor people—especially women and girls—bear the brunt of its impact.

By supporting the Oxfam America Advocacy Fund, you enable us to work with lawmakers to ensure that vulnerable communities have the resources to build their resilience to climate change.

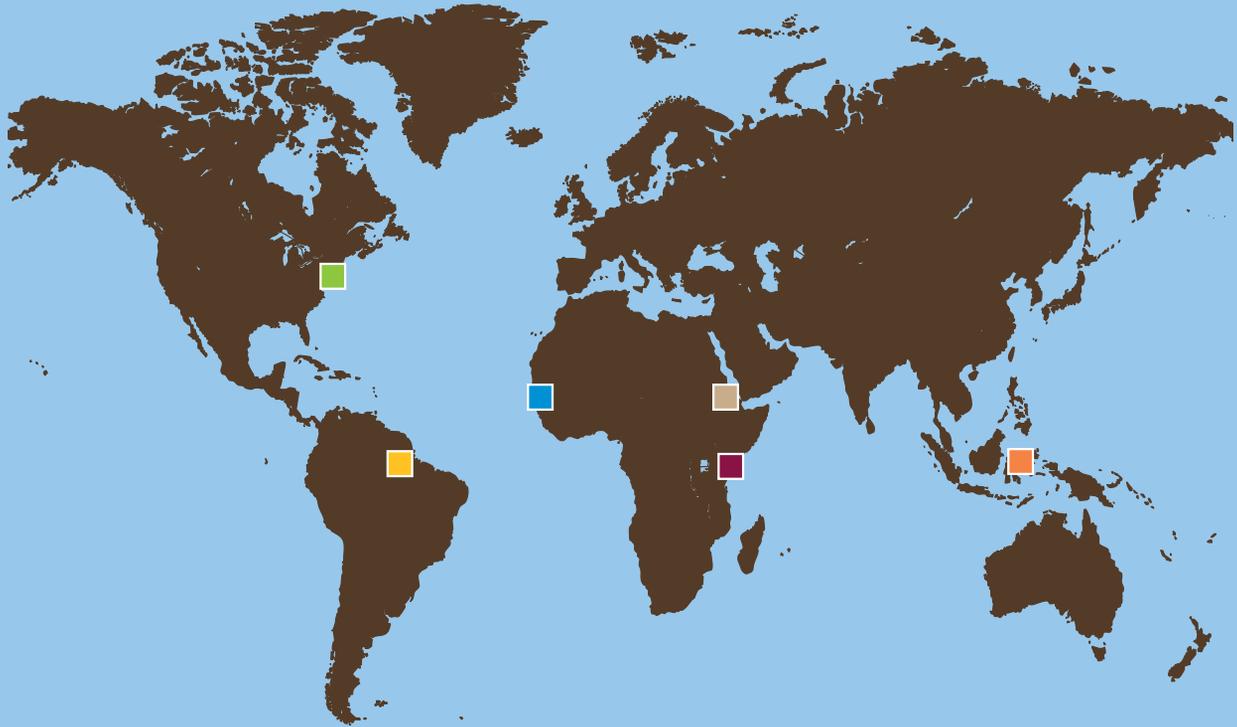
To donate now, go to www.aaaf.org/donate.



Advocacy Fund

Women and climate change

The effects of climate change—like droughts, floods, and storms—are hitting the world's poorest communities hardest. And since women make up an estimated 70 percent of those living below the poverty line, they often bear the heaviest burdens. Yet women can also help tackle the problem head-on by devising effective solutions that build people's resilience to the crisis.



■ On International Women's Day 2009, eight American women leaders—including a lieutenant governor, a minister, and a Gulf Coast community advocate—called on 25 US senators and representatives to support women worldwide affected by climate change. Inspired by Oxfam's "Sisters on the Planet" films, their visits generated a new Congressional resolution to help women here and abroad respond to the crisis. *Darren Santos / Oxfam America*



■ In Brazil, a women-led project called Pintadas Solar uses innovative techniques to help family farmers respond to drought in the arid northwestern region. The project uses solar-powered water pumps and drip irrigation systems to help locals harvest more crops—including corn, pumpkins, and beans—while using less water and energy. *Gilvan Barreto / Oxfam*



■ In Kenya, where communities were suffering from lack of natural resources, Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai started the Green Belt Movement to plant trees, replenishing resources and reducing soil erosion. Her movement spread worldwide. *Andy Aitchison / Oxfam*

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: GET INVOLVED

Climate change affects everyone, but women in poor communities and countries are particularly vulnerable: they often depend on rainfall (instead of irrigation) to water their crops; they are typically responsible for providing their household's water, food, and fuel supply; and they are less likely to have the education, opportunities, and resources they need to adapt to a shifting climate.

During disasters like hurricanes and floods, women are statistically more likely to die than men. Afterward, they are often deprived of essential services. Relief efforts regularly shortchange female health needs, such as obstetrical care. Girls drop out of school to save on school fees or to spend more time fetching water. In addition, women's traditional role as caretakers means they have little time for taking part in community discussions, so their perspectives and needs are often not heard.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Women—like the ones shown here—can also lead the fight against climate change. Many women in both rich and poor countries are powerful in their roles as consumers and citizens. And when women

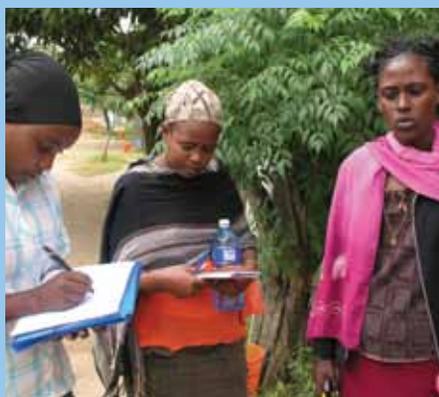
create networks and organizations, they can be a powerful force for social and political change.

How can you help?

> **Call, write, or email your member of Congress.** Ask him or her to support legislation that provides financial and other assistance to help people—especially women—build their resilience to climate change. By funding adaptation projects like the ones on these pages, we can save lives and strengthen vulnerable communities here and abroad. We can also save money by responding proactively instead of reacting to crises as they unfold. For the latest on US climate legislation, check our website at www.oxfamamerica.org/climate.

> **Become a Sister on the Planet (or a brother).** Go to www.oxfamamerica.org/sisters and watch four short films about women, in both rich and poor countries, who are determined to do whatever they can to put a stop to climate change. Then sign our Sisters pledge asking the US to help poor people adapt to the inevitable changes to their environment.

Writers: Anna Kramer and Andrea Perera



■ As part of a joint project between Oxfam America, our partner the Gayo Pastoral Development Initiative, and the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, local women in Moyale, Ethiopia, administer a surveillance system that anticipates needs before droughts hit. Once a month, four data collectors—all women—fan out to 20 households, meeting with the women who head them. They collect details about the well-being of their families and the condition of their neighbors and community. *Sarah Livingston / Oxfam America*



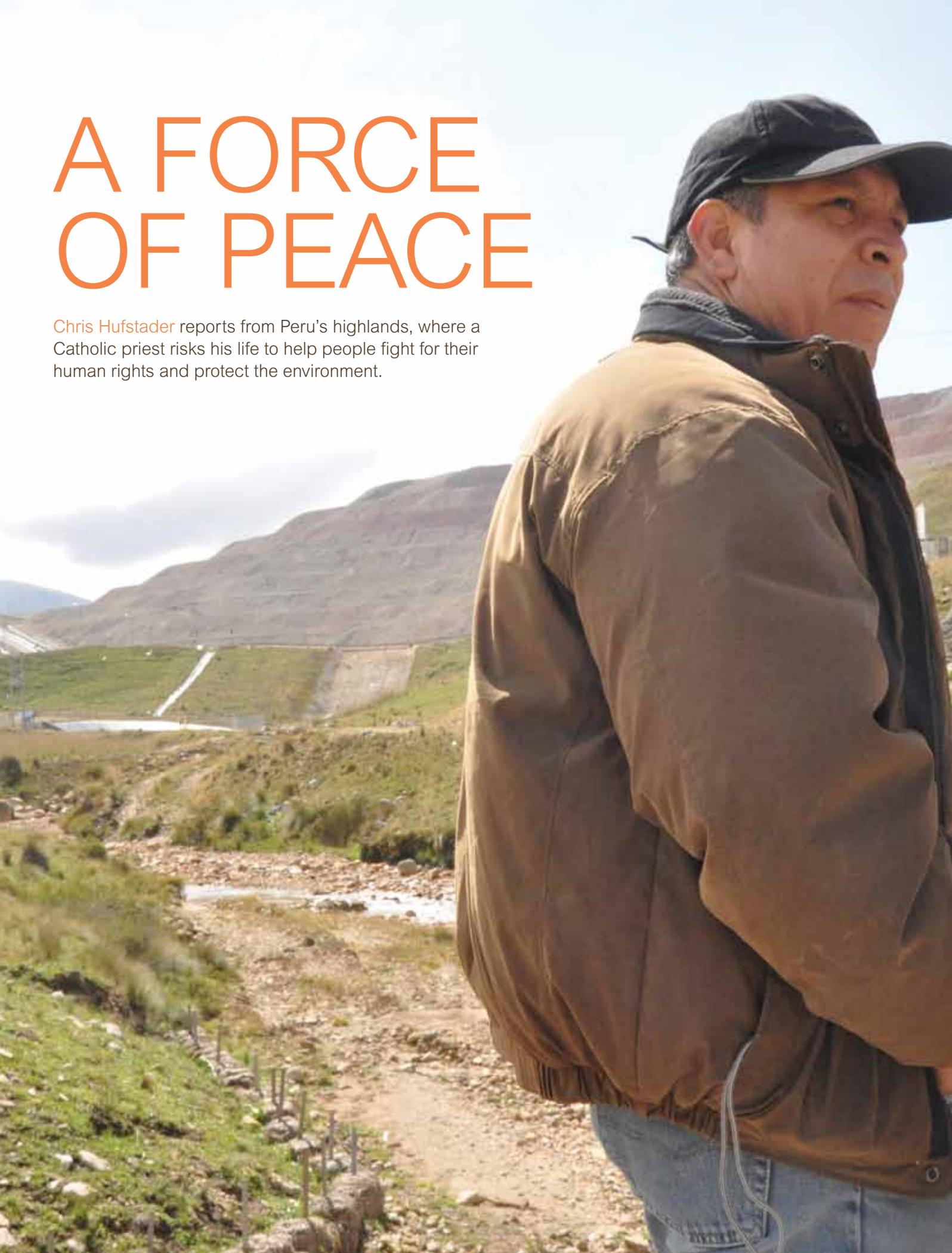
■ Oxfam's local partner in Gambia's North Bank Division, the Agency for the Development of Women and Children gives villagers a reserve of food and seeds to fall back on during times of shortage. They save some of their food and seeds at the end of each harvest in cereal banks. *Rebecca Blackwell / Oxfam America*



■ In the Papua region of eastern Indonesia, women trained by Oxfam and local partner Primari work as volunteer hygiene teachers, devising their own games, activities, and schedules to teach other women and families about safe practices like hand washing. In a region increasingly vulnerable to recurrent floods, good sanitation and hygiene can help prevent the spread of disease. *Jim Holmes / Oxfam*

A FORCE OF PEACE

Chris Hufstader reports from Peru's highlands, where a Catholic priest risks his life to help people fight for their human rights and protect the environment.





Father Marco Arana of Cajamarca, Peru, at the Yanacocha Gold Mine. He and farmers and environmentalists in the area are concerned about the effects of the mine on the region's water, including the stream seen here running past the heaps of ore in the background. A solution of water and cyanide is dripped through the ore in order to extract gold.



When he'd finally had enough of being followed and videotaped, and enough of the threatening phone calls, Father Marco Arana called the police.

They arrested someone named Miguel Ángel Saldaña Medina, who had been doing the surveillance. Subsequent media reports allege Saldaña was hired by a private security firm working for Minera Yanacocha, owner of the nearby Yanacocha Gold Mine. The police confiscated Saldaña's video camera. "The material showed extensive observation of Father Arana and the environmental NGO GRUFIDES," reports Edmundo Cruz in *La Republica*, a major newspaper in Peru.

"It also included pictures of office walls displaying photographs of local environmentalists, alongside code names for them," writes Cruz. "The photo of Father Arana was labeled 'El Diablo.'"

Operación Diablo—as it came to be known in the media—was an elaborate surveillance initiative tracking the movements of Father Arana and other members of the local organization GRUFIDES. One of Oxfam's local partners, GRUFIDES has been a critic of Yanacocha's gold-mining operations, established in Cajamarca, Peru, in 1993, and partly owned by Newmont Mining of Denver and the World Bank. It is a massive mine, currently operating on over 63,000 acres. The entire mine concession available comprises 690,000 acres, which

is roughly the size of the state of Rhode Island. In 2008, the mine produced 1.8 million ounces of gold.

Operación Diablo exposed how far Father Arana's opponents would go to discourage his work with local farmers adversely affected by the mine. More important, it raises the question: If a prominent figure like Father Arana is targeted and can be threatened in this way, what risks do indigenous farmers and vulnerable communities face in claiming their rights?

Farmers struggle

Although among the most profitable gold operations in the world, Yanacocha has been dogged by controversy. Farmers in Cajamarca say they were forced to sell their land to the mine and were not fairly compensated. The mine attracted thousands to the region in search of work, which forced up the cost of living and increased crime and competition for jobs.

But the biggest threats to local families have been environmental ones. In 2000, a truck spilled more than 600 pounds of mercury—a mining byproduct—along a road, poisoning 1,000 people in nearby villages. The mine's failure to clean up properly and care for those affected led to protests in the community of Choropampa in 2001. Incidents like this spill prompted Father Arana and community leaders to start asking questions, monitoring problems, and organizing farmers in the area to speak out about their concerns.

Farmers in Bajo Porcón, a small village that lies between Cajamarca and the mine, say things have deteriorated since the mine was established in 1993. The water level in their irrigation channel has dropped, causing crop and livestock problems. Augustin Zambrana de la Cruz plants fewer potatoes these days because he is no longer confident that there will be enough water to sustain his crops. De la Cruz is a member of a community water user committee in Bajo Porcón; members have tried to talk with the Yanacocha Mine about the quality and supply of water available, but their requests for meetings have usually been ignored. With few other options, they blocked the road to the mine in protest in 2008, and the leaders of the committee were arrested on terrorism charges. Like many others in farming com-

munities, Bajo Porcón's leaders have been forced to choose between the risks of bringing attention to their case through public action or remaining silent as their farms fail.

Some communities are pursuing legal solutions. They have established areas off-limits to mining by means of municipal ordinances that protect watersheds and other environmentally sensitive areas—to exert some local control over how community resources are used. Oxfam and GRUFIDES are collaborating with the Cajamarca Regional Environmental Resources Ministry to develop land-use policies to help communities set aside land for mining, agriculture, tourism, and other activities.

But local protection ordinances are being challenged in court by Yanacocha.

“ I discovered that even if they do not have much, they share what they have. ... I know God through the church and those living in poverty. ”



Outspoken advocate

Father Arana, 46, was born in Cajamarca, a stunning mountainous region in north-central Peru. “My grandparents farmed the land,” he says, “and had beautiful woods.” His parents were teachers, and he was raised in an environment where ideas flowed freely and there was high value placed on community. Father Arana recalls that from the time he was a child, his mother hosted neighbors—poor farmers—in their home. This shaped his thinking: “I learned enormous respect.” From the *campesinos*, he says, “I discovered that even if they do not have much, they share what they have. ... I know God through the church and those living in poverty.”

Despite poverty, “people are thankful to God for living every day,” he says. “They know their life depends on brotherhood and solidarity with others.”

But Father Arana says he has seen this sense of solidarity destroyed by war in the 1980s and a significant shift in the economy from agriculture toward mining. Controversy around Yanacocha has divided communities. The move to mining, Father Arana says, was not done in consultation with the local government or people of Cajamarca. His studies in sociology, philosophy, and theology in Rome have informed his analyses of the social and ethical landscape: “The people are not represented by the government,” he says. “The state is not on their side, but rather on the side of big capital.”

Such statements have earned Father Arana a reputation in Peru, and it is not entirely positive. The mining industry is influential: it brings in more than half of Peru’s export revenues and is adept at using the media to paint its detractors as wild-eyed radicals, even terrorists. Most of the wealthier people in Lima—home to half the country’s population—are unaware of the problems that communities affected by mining must face, and they see critics as irrational opponents of economic development.

But none of this has deterred Father Arana, who continues to speak out. He says that he is not trying to end mining, but to change the way it is conducted. “We want a better

world, and that includes mining companies,” he says in the office of GRUFIDES in Cajamarca. “They can’t understand the struggle we are in is a fight that includes them, too.”

The battle for Cerro Quilish

High above the ancient city of Cajamarca are the mountains Cerro Negro and Cerro Quilish. According to indigenous Quechua-speaking people, these twin peaks are brothers. The mountains talk to each other, they say, and protect them. Quilish is particularly revered; it is a source of water for the valley. In 2001, when irrigation channels and the Rio Porcón nearly ran dry, livestock died and crop yields plummeted. The farmers immediately suspected Yanacocha because the company had just started exploring for gold on Quilish. They complained but got no response. By 2004, their patience exhausted, the farmers blocked the road to the mine. The mine had to shut down, and the police and army came in. The center of Cajamarca—the scene of a conflict between Pizarro’s conquistadors and the Inca king Atahualpa in 1532—was engulfed in protests; the crowds were so big that the police could not control the situation.

Father Arana stepped in. Footage shot by documentary filmmakers—and Oxfam partners—Stephanie Boyd and Ernesto Cabellos shows Father Arana on a cell phone asking military leaders to stop firing on unarmed *campesinos*. In the next scene, Father Arana pleads with protestors to stop throwing rocks at the police: “In the name of God, please listen to me!” When protestors threaten to destroy the mining operation on Quilish, Father Arana talks them out of it.

“Marco was the key to a peaceful resolution,” says Javier Aroca, an attorney and Oxfam’s lead on mining in South America. “His efforts kept large numbers of people from being injured.” In December 2004, Father Arana received Peru’s highest human rights award for his work as a mediator in “promoting dialogue and peaceful solutions to the controversy in Cajamarca.”

The mine agreed to temporarily suspend exploration of Cerro Quilish and publicly acknowledged that it had underestimated the concerns of the people for their mountain.



JESSICA ERICKSON / OXFAM AMERICA

▲ Safarino Zambrano, 54, leads the water user committee in the small town of Bajo Porcón, where people are concerned about the amount of water available to them for irrigating their potato and corn fields. Most have given up trying to raise livestock, owing to lack of water. The irrigation channel runs along the side of the road in one section of town, which makes it vulnerable to contamination from any accident involving trucks carrying fuel or chemicals.

◀ The valleys of Cajamarca are ideal for raising crops and livestock, but a strategic economic shift toward mining is leaving many young people wondering if they can compete for the few jobs available at the mine. Lack of water and low prices for crops make farming a more and more difficult way to make a living.

Right to know, Right to decide | An overview and recent milestones

The events near Cajamarca are part of a pattern seen in many of the world's poorest countries. That's why Oxfam's campaign calls on major oil, gas, and mining companies to respect people's right to know about how these projects could affect their communities. Once communities have the information they need, they have the right to decide whether or not to consent to a project that affects their land, water, health, and means of earning a living.

Conflicts between communities and mining companies (and the governments that concede land to the companies for mining, usually without any consultation with the communities) are common. People wishing to block a mine or prevent its expansion invoke their right to be consulted in a meaningful way and to say no to a mining proposal.

Others in areas currently affected by mining can object to the way the mining is carried out or how mining revenues to the government are being spent. In some cases, it is difficult to determine whether any mining revenues make it back to mining-affected areas at all.

Oxfam America is working with organizations that are helping communities be heard in these struggles. The power differential between poor communities in Ghana, Peru, Mali, and Guatemala is usually huge, and one of the first steps to narrowing this gap is to help local organizations like GRUFIDES train local leaders, educate them about their rights, and give them the knowledge and tools they need to advocate on their own behalf and get some respect.



El Salvador

With 96 percent of his country's surface water already contaminated, El Salvador's outgoing President Elias Antonio Saca announced in February that his government would not grant any mining permits. If incoming President Mauricio Funes sticks to that position—and analysts predict he will—El Salvador could become the first Latin American country to exercise its right to say no to mining. The move comes as Canadian mining company Pacific Rim pushes for a mining production license under the rules of the Central America Free Trade Agreement. Oxfam helped to change the terms of the debate in El Salvador last March by releasing a report on the costs and benefits of mining in Central America. The report helped to focus attention on the issue and bolstered the work of citizen groups, environmental organizations, and the Catholic Church, which oppose mining in the country.

▲ A gold mine in Honduras treats ore with cyanide to extract gold, an efficient but environmentally risky technique. Farmers and others in El Salvador are concerned that if the country allows mining, what little clean water is available to them will be diverted to mines, leaving them unable to make a decent living. *Edgar Orellana / Oxfam America*



West Africa

The Economic Community of West African States just adopted a uniform policy on mining, which will standardize the social, environmental, and financial standards for mines in the region. From now on, mines will need to consult with local communities and give them a meaningful role in decisions about mine projects, as well as adhere to more stringent requirements for the environment and better, more transparent financial standards that will reduce corruption and ensure that mining revenues help the people of the country. Oxfam America helped to convene representatives of citizen groups to consult on the new policies so that they reflect the concerns of people in mining-affected communities.

▲ A young woman and a boy work a patch of groundnuts near a waste dump for a gold mine in western Mali. Gold mining has surpassed cotton in export revenues in recent years, a significant economic shift for Mali. Yet unclear financial regulations make it difficult for gold-mining communities to be certain how much mining revenues make it back to the communities producing the gold. *Brett Eloff / Oxfam America*



Ghana

In 2008, Oxfam and the Ghanaian organization ISODEC published a report on new offshore oil reserves near Ghana, advocating transparent, accountable, and efficient development of Ghana's oil wealth. Shortly after releasing the report, Ghana's President-elect John Evans Atta Mills announced that all current and future agreements with companies to develop the nation's oil and gas resources will be made public, and that his administration will require public input on new and existing legislation regulating the oil industry. If implemented, these commitments will help Ghana avoid what has happened in the gold-mining industry, which critics say contributes a small percentage—perhaps as low as 5 percent—of its revenues to Ghana's economy while communities absorb all the negative effects, such as loss of farms and pollution.

Ghana's newly discovered offshore oil reserves could produce as much as 120,000 barrels a day by 2011 and contribute \$20 billion in revenue by 2030. The commitment by the incoming president to require disclosure of oil revenues will help citizens monitor how the money is used to fight poverty.

Fear, violence, and a way forward

The years of war and repression in Peru have destroyed many of the citizen groups needed to help communities set local development priorities. Nelida Chilón, a young woman from Bajo Porcón, recognizes this leadership gap and says the *campesinos* rely on Father Arana to help them protect their water supply.

"We are only asking for our basic rights," she says. "The mayor of Cajamarca says nothing, the president of the country does nothing. ... This is why we look to Father Arana. ... We ask him to take care of himself."

“We are only asking for our basic rights. The mayor. ... says nothing, the president of the country does nothing. ... This is why we look to Father Arana.”

Since the wars of the 1980s and the repressive tactics of former President Alberto Fujimori's successive administrations, many people in Peru remain distrustful of those seeking social change. There is a fear of backsliding into social upheaval and violence. Many people who want something better from their country do not speak out or have lost sight of the fact that they have the power to create change. And it is the people in the countryside in particular who are struggling to hold the government accountable, but they lack the expertise to do this effectively. Oxfam America is working with leaders like Father Arana to help rural and especially indigenous communities develop nonviolent means to get the government to understand their needs and act on them.

The people of Peru are rebuilding civil society, but it takes time. And courage.

It was after Father Arana helped defuse the confrontation over Cerro Quilish that Operación Diablo was launched. He began receiving anonymous death threats. Someone called his young niece, telling her that her uncle would be killed. One of his colleagues, attorney Mirtha Vásquez,

received a call from a man who said that she would be raped, killed, and fed to dogs. Father Arana and Vásquez were followed, photographed, and monitored from an office set up across the street from GRUFIDES headquarters. In all, there were at least 20 incidents of threats and intimidation of GRUFIDES staff in the latter half of 2006, according to Peru's National Coordinator of Human Rights.

In early 2007, Oxfam America filed a complaint against Newmont Mining under the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, a global initiative in which

mining and oil companies commit to respecting human rights. A well-known Peruvian human rights expert is now investigating the case.

GRUFIDES filed complaints at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which ordered the government of Peru to assume responsibility for the safety of Father Arana and GRUFIDES staff. Now when he works in communities, Father Arana must travel with an armed guard.

"I keep doing this work because there is no other way to protect the people I care for and the land that I love," he says, standing in a field overlooking the mine in the distance as his armed guard in plain clothes hovers nearby. "There is no other way to protect them than to raise our voices and keep working. We have to expose our lives to defend life. We don't like this and don't want to work this way, but that is our life right now.

"Violence cannot be stopped with more violence. Violence must be stopped with the force of peace."



Read | Learn | Change the world

For stories and more information about Oxfam's work on oil, gas, and mining, go to www.oxfamamerica.org/rights-resources.



Coming home again

Coco McCabe reports on Oxfam America's effort to rebuild homes for those displaced by Bangladesh's 2007 Cyclone Sidr.

When Cyclone Sidr slammed into Bangladesh in November 2007, with winds up to 133 miles per hour, the storm damaged or destroyed more than one million homes across the southern reaches of this low-lying country. By the time the tempest had passed, every single house in Padma, a small village of about 700 families, was gone.

One of them belonged to a young woman named Sarina (see photo on inside front cover). Together with her husband and two sons, she had lived in a house built on a strip of no man's land—an exposed edge on the outside of a dike along an estuary where the Baleswar River meets the Bay of Bengal. The storm swept away almost everything they owned.

But today, Sarina and her family are settled into a sturdy new house—on the inside of

1,100 more, and they asked BRAC to build them. All told, 1,500 of the storm-worthy homes now dot the Bangladesh coast.

"It is much better than our old house," says Sarina. "The cement pillars are strong. The bricks surrounding the veranda are important. They stop the ground from being damaged during the monsoon rains."

In any given year, almost 79 inches of rain swamps large portions of Bangladesh, with some regions in the northeast getting twice that amount. About 80 percent of it falls during the monsoon season, which can leave a third of the country submerged—with water turning the dirt foundations of many coastal homes to slop. And when cyclones hit, with their high winds, tidal surges, and heavy rains, the damage can be catastrophic, as it was with Sidr.

“It is much better than our old house. The cement pillars are strong. The bricks surrounding the veranda. ... stop the ground from being damaged during the monsoon.”

the dike—just like 153 other Padma families. They are participants in the largest housing construction initiative Oxfam America has ever undertaken.

Together with one of our sister organizations, Oxfam Novib, and its local partner, BRAC, Oxfam America has built 400 houses in two of Bangladesh's devastated districts: Patuakhali and Barguna, where Padma lies. With their brick foundations, concrete corner pillars, and frames made of seasoned timber from local trees, the small but solid houses inspired European governments to invest in

But when 84 percent of the population lives on less than \$2 a day, coming up with the cash to replace ruined homes and wrecked businesses is impossible for many people—especially if they have no land. In Padma, about 80 families live on the strip of government-owned land, known as the *khas*, outside the dike. Though some have lived there for more than two decades, none of them have formal title to their plots.

Sarina was among Padma's landless. And not only did the storm destroy her family's house, but it smashed the fishing boat Sarina's husband used to support them and

Local carpenters, funded by Oxfam and BRAC, complete work on an improved home for Anwara, a widow who lives with her two sons in Mirzagonj, Bangladesh—a community near Padma that was similarly devastated by Cyclone Sidr.

killed two of their three precious cows. With few options left, Sarina's family sold the remaining cow and used the money to buy a small piece of land inside the embankment for 15,000 taka—or about \$220.

Hard as that choice may have been, it enabled the family to qualify for the housing program. The initiative was aimed at helping some of the most vulnerable residents—if they had access to land.

"Now I am very happy because BRAC gave us this house," Sarina says, showing visitors around inside. Fifteen feet by 10 feet with a large covered veranda, the houses have roofs high enough to accommodate a small attic that families use as extra sleeping quarters or for storing household goods. Called "core" houses, the dwellings were purposely designed so that families could expand their living space as needed—walling in the verandas, for instance, as some of them have already done.

At a cost of \$730 each, the houses are both strong and versatile. But as badly as people in Padma need safe and decent homes, families who have nowhere else to live but the khas were not eligible for the program, since the land they occupy isn't officially theirs. Among the village's poorest, many of them were still living in makeshift huts of thatch and plastic 10 months after the storm.

BRAC had approached the government for permission to build up to 100 houses on the khas, says Kenny Rae, Oxfam America's humanitarian response specialist who oversaw the housing project. But convincing a country to alter its policies can take time. It requires concentrated advocacy efforts. And while that process is under way, help-

ing other poor people resolve their need for better shelter is important, too.

"People with title to land may be just as poor," says Rae. "The only difference is they may have a tiny bit of land. Many of the housing plots are no more than 50 feet by 50 feet."

And with climate change likely to increase the intensity of storms that batter Bangladesh, improved housing for countless poor people is going to be essential.

"These houses have been designed to be cyclone-resistant," Rae adds. "Hopefully with this adaptation, some people will be better prepared for future storms."



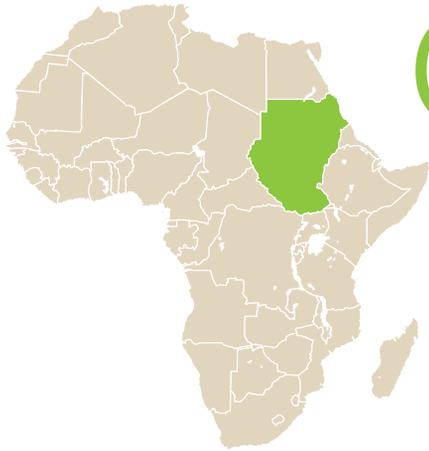
Read | Learn | Change the world

For stories and more information about Oxfam's work in Bangladesh, go to www.oxfamamerica.org/bangladesh.

KENNY RAE / OXFAM AMERICA







Growing in Darfur

Following the expulsion of 13 international aid groups, **Coco McCabe** explains how Oxfam America will be expanding operations in Darfur, Sudan, to help 450,000 people affected by the conflict there.

In early March, the International Criminal Court issued a warrant for the arrest of Sudan's president, Omar al-Bashir, on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Sudan's vast and impoverished region of Darfur has experienced years of violence and brutality.

But the court's move met with swift and unexpected action from the Sudanese government. Within days, Sudan had expelled 13 international aid groups and dissolved three local ones. Together, they had been providing more than 50 percent of the support for some of the 2.7 million people forced from their homes by the conflict in Darfur.

Among those expelled was Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam America's sister organization and one of 13 that make up the international federation of Oxfams. The expulsions left gaping holes in the web of life-saving services the aid groups had woven together.

But immediately, Oxfam America, which is still operating in Sudan, began making plans to expand its programs to meet the new needs of hundreds of thousands of people, including the delivery of some water and sanitation services. As this magazine goes to press, Oxfam America is in the process of quintupling its Sudanese workforce—from 6 to 30—while expanding its support for a host of local agencies that are delivering critical assistance to displaced people in camps

and remote villages. Their work has included helping families restore lost incomes through vocational training, small business loans, and the distribution of key assets like donkeys.

"All along our strategy has been to help local groups build their strength and effectiveness in preparation for the eventual withdrawal of international aid groups," says Michael Delaney, the director of Oxfam America's humanitarian response department. "That's come sooner than we expected, but it has validated the way we do our work. By supporting local agencies, as we have throughout this crisis, we are helping them to be in a better position to tackle the ongoing issues of housing, health care, and water resources that confront the people of Darfur."

Oxfam America is planning to double its budget for Darfur this year, bumping it to \$4.7 million. Though details are still being worked out, Delaney says the scale-up will bring the total number of beneficiaries to 450,000. Oxfam America has just completed negotiations with the Sudanese government for permission to take over some of the water and sanitation facilities displaced people have been relying on. Oxfam America plans to run some of those operations itself; its local partners will run others.

Despite concerns voiced by the international community about the versatility of local aid groups, Delaney is confident that Oxfam's partners do have the ability to take on large technical projects in the camps.

"People have been working in these camps for five years. And if they don't know what to do, shame on Oxfam," he says. "The real issue is providing oversight for getting fuel into the camps to run the water pumps. Fuel is hard to get and strongly regulated. Good logistical support is what's needed."

Looking ahead, Delaney says he is encouraged by the Obama administration's appointment of a special envoy for the region—Major General Scott J. Graton. But Delaney acknowledges that the people of Darfur are in a more precarious position than ever.

"With the expulsion of so many aid organizations, I do feel the situation in Darfur is at a crisis point," says Delaney. "Hopefully the efforts to resolve that problem will lead to some resolution of the larger crisis, too, and the nightmare for the people of Darfur will end."

◀ Ishaq Adam with two of his children and the donkey he received from Oxfam. "My house was burnt and my donkey died," says Ishaq, "so when I got this donkey, I was very happy. And it's because we're happy we've called the donkey Buiet (happy). Now I'm able to go far away to collect firewood and ... earn an income. There are 10 in the household: eight children, my wife, and myself."



Read | Learn | Change the world

For stories and more information on Oxfam's work in Darfur, go to www.oxfamamerica.org/darfur.



226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02114-2206

Nonprofit Org
US Postage
PAID
Permit #57267
Boston, MA

♻️ Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

© 2009 Oxfam America Inc. All Rights Reserved. Oxfam America is a registered trademark of Oxfam America Inc., and the Oxfam logo is a registered trademark of Stichting Oxfam International. Oxfam employees are represented by UNITEHERE, Local 33 (Boston), and Service Employees International Union, Local 500 (Washington, DC). 0905030



PERCY RAMIREZ / OXFAM AMERICA

Plan for your future while helping to secure hers.

A charitable gift annuity allows you to support Oxfam's work while simultaneously providing you with a stable income for life. Other benefits include:

- charitable tax deductions,
- tax-free income, and
- greater security in a volatile marketplace.

For a customized annuity profile, contact Steven Maughan, Oxfam's planned giving officer, at (800) 776-9326 ext 2723, smaughan@oxfamamerica.org, or visit our website at www.oxfamamerica.org/plannedgiving.

Charitable gift annuity rates are determined by age and set by the ACGA. Please consult your financial adviser to evaluate the value of a gift annuity as part of your comprehensive financial plan.