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Oxfam Fact Sheet | Pakistan floods

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SEPTEMBER 2010

In summer 2010, unusually heavy monsoon rains triggered devastating floods along Pakistan's populous Indus River Valley. By September, the flooding had affected an estimated 21 million people—more than were affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Haiti earthquake, and Pakistan's 2005 earthquake combined. With health risks growing by the day, it's up to us to work with the Pakistani people to save lives now and begin rebuilding for the future.

The facts

More than 1,700 people died in the floods, and more than 2,000 have been reported injured. Nearly two million houses were damaged or destroyed, while rushing water swept away roads, bridges, and villages, ruined crops, and triggered landslides. Though some of the flood waters have receded, as of mid September large areas of Sindh province are still under water.

Many of the flood survivors now find themselves facing a health crisis. For families living in temporary shelters or out in the open, without access to clean water and sanitation facilities, the risk of disease and infection is high. In the first two weeks of September, the number of cases of acute diarrhea, skin disease, acute respiratory infections, and suspected malaria in Pakistan tripled. Malnutrition also is a growing threat.

Who is affected?

Though Pakistan has a history of divisive conflict, the majority of people affected by the flooding are civilians—including an estimated 8.6 million children.

"Pakistan's children should have gone back to school in mid August, but with more than 8,000 schools destroyed or damaged, and a further 5,000 [schools] being used as temporary shelters, they face months of disruption to their education," says Neva Khan, Oxfam's country director in Pakistan.

Family farms—the primary source of food and income for many Pakistani families—also suffered tremendous losses, with 8.4 million acres of crops lost in the flooding. Due to damage to their seeds, fertilizers, and soil, many farmers may not be able to recover in time for the September and October planting season.



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I got married just four years ago. I have three small children, an ailing mother, and a blind father ... There is water flowing where my home was. I have lost 20 acres of cotton crops ... So now we are here, in front of you, empty-handed. Look at the sky above and the hovering clouds; I have no place to hide these small innocent children and old parents if it rains now.

Mohammad Naeem, 27, flood survivor, Wasti Kallar, Pakistan

Oxfam America

We're an international relief and development organization that creates lasting solutions to poverty, hunger, and injustice. We are part of Oxfam, a confederation of 13 organizations working in more than 90 countries. Together with individuals and local groups in these countries, we save lives, help people overcome poverty, and fight for social justice. Learn more about us at oxfamamerica.org.

Above: "We are happy that we can play around the camp, but we are not happy about the heat and flies," say Nazia (left) and Uzma, who live in a camp for people displaced by the floods in the Nowshera district of Pakistan. When Oxfam's Mubashar Hasan visited the camp, he was struck by the resilience of the children living there: "It requires a lot of courage to smile when there is little or no food to eat, no home to live in, very little clean water to drink, [and] no bed to sleep in," he wrote. *Mubashar Hasan / Oxfam*

Oxfam's work in Pakistan

Oxfam has been working in Pakistan since 1973. We support local partners and work with government authorities to improve the livelihoods of those living in poverty and provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by disasters and conflict. In the aftermath of the major earthquake that rocked northern Pakistan in 2005, Oxfam provided hundreds of thousands of people with clean water, sanitation facilities, and shelter.

Oxfam works closely with partner organizations on the ground, conducting careful checks before accepting any local organization as a partner. We have well-developed financial reporting procedures, and we monitor and assess the work we fund to ensure that aid is being delivered in a fair and responsible manner. Working with local partners helps ensure that our response to emergencies like the Pakistan floods is swift, effective, and culturally appropriate.

For example, in early August, a navy of Punjab province fishermen known as "Malah" and volunteers worked with local groups, Oxfam, and the Pakistani authorities to rescue families cut off by rising flood waters. Using wooden fishing boats and their knowledge of the zigzagging waterways, they were able to evacuate more than 50,000 people.

Responding to the floods

Oxfam and our partners have launched a rapid-relief effort to reach more than one million people with essential aid. Despite major damage to the region's transportation and communication systems, we are installing latrines and water-storage tanks and delivering clean water by truck to prevent deadly waterborne diseases from sweeping through communities of displaced people.

As of mid September, Oxfam and our partners have made significant accomplishments:

- Provided safe evacuation to more than 240,000 people, using local search and rescue boats.
- Provided emergency shelter materials to more than 70,000 people.
- Provided clean water to nearly 745,000 people displaced by the floods.
- Distributed hygiene supplies like soap to more than 470,000 people.
- Provided more than 85,000 people with cash vouchers to purchase food and household items from local vendors.
- Provided more than 7,500 people with cash payments in exchange for community-service work.

To help people keep their remaining livestock in good health, we are planning a vaccination and deworming program. And throughout the response, Oxfam will look for cash-for-work opportunities to help people earn badly needed income while accomplishing key recovery tasks.

What can you do to help?

Thanks to Oxfam's commitment to planning and preparedness—and to the generosity of our supporters—we have already been able to reach more than a million people with live-saving help. But too many people are still stranded without aid, and children, in particular, are considered at high risk for deadly waterborne disease.

We have the knowledge, experience, staff, and commitment required to do this critical job. But we won't succeed without your support. Please give generously to Oxfam's flood relief and recovery efforts.

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BY MAIL Oxfam America, 226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02114-2206

Please make your check payable to "Oxfam America."

More than 90 percent of funds designated by donors for humanitarian emergencies directly support Oxfam's relief efforts.



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People need water. They drink from the river, but the river water isn't clean; we're worried about outbreaks of disease.

Qasim Berech, Oxfam public health specialist in Pakistan, on his team's effort to deliver water to an isolated city in the Upper Swat Valley, Aug. 24, 2010.

Above: A woman draws water from a tap in a camp for displaced people in the Larkana region of Pakistan. Over 200 similar camps have sprung up in this region during the last month, providing temporary refuge for families who lost their homes in the floods. Oxfam is working to ensure displaced people can access clean water and other essential needs. *Asim Saqlain / Oxfam*

Working together to end poverty and injustice

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