

# PHILIPPINES TYPHOON



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## EMERGENCY UPDATE, 8 FEB 2014 – THREE MONTHS ON

*“What we need most is to recover our livelihoods – our source of income. We are roofless, homeless, but not helpless.”* Rose Felicio, who received a hygiene kit and mosquito nets thanks to Oxfam supporters.



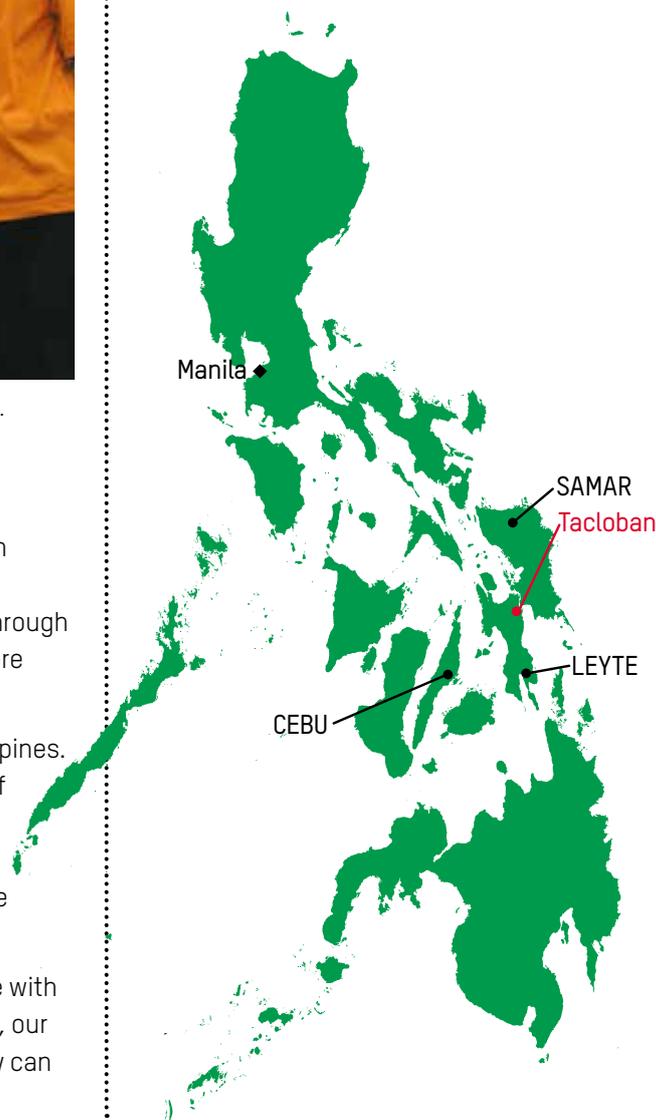
Local children fill buckets at a tapstand provided by Oxfam, Tacloban.  
Photo: Jane Beesley/Oxfam.

On 08 November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan (or Yolanda as it's known locally) wreaked havoc across much of the central Philippines. Terrifying winds combined with a huge storm surge to smash through coastal communities. In total, 6,190 people were killed, and more than four million people were forced from their homes.

The disaster delivered a double blow to the people of the Philippines. In the short term, it left more than 14.1 million people in need of immediate, life-saving assistance. But it also pushed millions of poor people further into poverty and debt. Rice crops, coconut trees and fishing boats were wiped out, leaving people struggling to grow food and earn an income.

In response, Oxfam has now reached more than 547,000 people with the support they need to survive and recover. Three months on, our overwhelming focus is on helping families make a living so they can rebuild their shattered lives.

## WHERE OXFAM IS WORKING



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## WHAT WE'RE DOING

As well as working closely with local partner organisations, Oxfam has supported the government to deliver its emergency response. We are also part of the UN 'cluster' system, which brings together agencies working on the same issue (eg water, food or shelter) to ensure aid reaches as many people affected as possible.

### WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, our focus was on preventing the spread of disease, by providing clean water, toilets and hygiene essentials. Here are just a few highlights of what our supporters helped us achieve in the first three months:

- Distributed 62,500 hygiene kits, so families can stay free of disease. Kits contain buckets, soap and clean underwear, as well as mosquito nets and sleeping mats.
- Provided 27,300 water kits, containing a jerry can, bucket and water treatment materials, so families can drink clean, safe water.
- Built or repaired 3,300 community toilets, and constructed washing blocks and handwashing stations, so people can stay healthy and clean.

We have also helped communities to manage and maintain their water and sanitation facilities. For example, we have been:

- Setting up local hygiene committees and training health volunteers to promote good hygiene, as well as providing brushes, gloves and wheelbarrows to keep pumps, wells and toilets clean.
- Helping communities, schools and hospitals to empty (or 'desludge') their pit latrines, as the pits dug in the immediate aftermath of the disaster have become full.
- Working with local government to organise rubbish collections and improve how rubbish is managed and removed.

Finally, we are helping to prevent diseases, such as dengue and malaria, which are spread by mosquitoes. Working with the Department of Health in Tacloban, we are paying local workers and providing equipment to drain the standing water where mosquitoes breed. This will help 21,000 vulnerable families stay healthy and strong, so they can focus on rebuilding their lives.



Photo: Eleanor Farmer/Oxfam.

### RECONNECTING THE WATER SUPPLY IN TACLOBAN

In Tacloban, we worked with the local water department to repair and reconnect the municipal water supply. Within days, we helped them get fuel to start their generator, and provided an extra generator for backup. We also repaired the distribution pipes, installed new distribution points and tapstands, and helped the water department to test and monitor water quality. It all meant more than 200,000 of the worst affected people received clean, safe water within days of the typhoon hitting.

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## WHAT WE'RE DOING

### HELPING PEOPLE GET FOOD



**Providing cash.** After the disaster hit, families were desperate for food. Our first step was to assess whether local markets were open for business, and whether people could buy what they needed. If the markets were functioning, we decided to give cash wherever possible – either cash grants or cash in return for work such as clearing debris, draining ditches or removing rubbish. Cash gives people choice and control over their lives, and keeps the local economy going during difficult times.

### EARNING A LIVING

Of course, cash can only be a temporary measure. If communities are to come back stronger, we need to help people start earning a living again, so they can support and feed their families, repair their homes and rebuild their broken country.



**Rice farming.** The typhoon destroyed much of the country's rice harvest, including the seeds for the next planting season. Thousands of families could have gone hungry if farmers were unable to plant crops in December and January. We moved quickly to get rice seed to 6,000 farmers in Leyte, so families could earn a living again and help prevent a serious rice shortage.



**Coconut farming.** Millions of coconut trees were felled by the storm, wiping out a vital source of income for farmers. What's more, fallen trees are starting to rot, and mean the land can't be put to use. We're working with co-operatives of coconut farmers to chop up the trees and sell the timber locally. We're providing equipment such as chainsaws, as well as training sessions on health and safety and making business plans.



**Fishing.** We are working with fishing communities to rebuild boats and repair nets, so they can start to earn a living. In total, we plan to support 2,000 fishing families in 40 neighbourhoods.

It will take time before farmers are able to earn a living again from their crops and the sea. That's why we're also running workshops to help men and women identify alternative sources of income in the meantime. This could include producing handicrafts, processing food, making furniture, or getting involved in the tourist industry.



*"Oxfam has given us the equipment, so let us help each other to succeed."* Crispin Miranda, Leyte Island. Photo: Simon Roberts/Oxfam.

### CHAINSaws AND COCONUT TREES

Crispin Miranda is a farmer in Tanauan on Leyte Island. When the Typhoon hit, it wiped out all of the farmers' crops and left people like Crispin with no way to earn a living. *"I felt like crying – no home, no more plants, no crops to expect."* What's more, fallen coconut trees made the land unusable. Oxfam is supplying farmers like Crispin with chainsaws and protective clothing so they can clear trees from the land. And we're providing training on marketing and business, so they can sell the wood locally. It's a lifeline for Crispin and his family: *"I would like to thank Oxfam for encouraging us and giving us guidance, so we will be successful."*

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## TYPHOON HAIYAN: TIMELINE OF OXFAM'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**2013**

**8 NOV**

Typhoon Haiyan hits land, with winds of 145 mph (230 kph) and storm surges 5m high. Hardest hit areas include the islands of Leyte and Samar.

The first Oxfam rapid assessment teams visit the hardest hit areas, and investigate the needs of the most vulnerable people.

**9 NOV**

The immediate response focuses on Northern Cebu, Leyte and Eastern Samar. Teams face huge logistical challenges – roads are blocked, airports closed, and electricity and water supplies cut off.

**10/11  
NOV**

By the end of the first week, people devastated by the typhoon are already receiving life-saving supplies of water, food and shelter.

**15 NOV**

Within a month, we have supported more than 300,000 people with emergency aid, including water purification kits, community toilets and cash to buy household essentials.

**DEC**

**2014**

**JAN**

Two months in, we continue to provide immediate relief as well as supporting long-term needs. For example, we distribute rice seeds so farmers can plant their crops in time.

**FEB**

By the end of month three, our teams have reached 547,000 people. We're now helping people get their livelihoods back, for example by repairing fishing boats and nets.

**MAR**

We'll continue to help families earn a living, and we'll press organisations and governments to ensure the recovery is properly funded and considers the needs of vulnerable people.

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## HELPING BEHIND THE SCENES

### LOBBYING FOR SUPPORT

We are using our experience to examine the specific needs of people affected by the typhoon, and identify any gaps in the response effort. For example, we are working to **ensure homeless families get safe, comfortable accommodation**. The Philippines government is proposing to place families in 'bunkhouses', hostel-type buildings with shared facilities. However, the initial proposals were inadequate – the rooms were too small, there were too many families per building, and the plans for water and sanitation were poor. As a result of pressure from Oxfam and other agencies, the number of families per bunkhouse has dropped from 24 to 12. We will continue to work with the government to improve the plans for these buildings, in particular so that they give families and women enough light and privacy.

### ACCESSING ESSENTIAL SERVICES

As a result of the typhoon, many people have lost official documents such as ID cards and birth certificates which they need to get health care or claim government loans. Many families have been asked to provide authenticated documents which can only be obtained from Manila, and this is prolonging an already difficult process. As well as helping people know what they are entitled to, we are working with local organisations and government agencies to simplify claims, so families get the support they need more quickly.

### RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF WOMEN

Throughout our response efforts, our priority is to understand how women and men have been affected differently by the typhoon, and to ensure their needs are met. For example:

- We gave special hygiene kits to mothers of newborn babies, and prioritised pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers when providing support.
- We're ensuring that toilets and washing areas have separate areas for men and women, and include space for washing clothes and caring for children.
- We're producing posters on preventing domestic violence, as the stressful, cramped conditions can put women at risk.
- We're working with government agencies to ensure that both men and women are able to register for assistance.



Herald Postero, 85, was one of the first people to receive a hygiene kit in northern Cebu.  
Photo: Jane Beesley/Oxfam.

### LEARNING ALL THE TIME

We have been constantly monitoring and adapting our activities, to ensure we are giving people the best support. From the outset, we have spoken with families and consulted local communities to find out what they need so we can design our work to fit. We're conducting reviews of all activities after six weeks, and at regular intervals for the next three years, so we can make ongoing changes and improvements. And we're sharing what we've learned with other organisations and Oxfam teams across the world.

We've also set up a free phone and SMS hotline so people can send us feedback. We've received hundreds of messages from people suggesting improvements, challenging our selection criteria or just asking for information. All comments are referred to the appropriate teams so we can improve our projects if we need to.

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## CHALLENGES

Our teams have worked hard with local communities to overcome some of the many logistical challenges we faced, for example:

- In the initial stages, we hired helicopters and small planes to move people and materials before commercial flights became available.
- In eastern Samar, communication was via satellite phone only for the first month, and until recently electricity was still supplied by a generator.
- In Leyte, we struggled to find a place to store all our kit. When we helped the municipal water department in Leyte they offered us valuable warehouse space.
- Families in tents and temporary shelters were hit by another tropical storm in January which caused flooding and mudslides, and considerable delays transporting staff and materials.
- To overcome security issues when providing cash grants, we worked with money transfer agencies so staff and recipients were no longer at risk.

## WHAT NEXT

In the three months since the typhoon hit, the generosity of Oxfam supporters and the wider UK public has saved lives in the Philippines. People whose lives, homes and livelihoods were torn apart by the typhoon have shown incredible resilience, and are now starting to recover and rebuild. We will support families as they start to earn a living again, so they can come back stronger than ever. We'll also work with the Philippines government to make sure the recovery is focused on helping the poorest people out of poverty. And we'll continue to call on the international community to provide the long-term funding people need to build a better future for their country.



Photo: Simon Roberts/Oxfam.

### OUR RICE FIELDS WON'T BE EMPTY

Rice farmer Gistado Gallaron lost half his rice crop when the typhoon devastated his community in Tanauan: *"I was very sad because the thought of having no livelihood is devastating for us."* Gistado received three sacks of rice seeds from Oxfam and has also been earning extra money through Oxfam's cash for work scheme, clearing damaged coconut trees and turning wood into lumber that can be used to rebuild houses. This support has helped him hope for a better future: *"I am very grateful to Oxfam for helping us. In one year, you will see an improvement because of the help you have given us. You will see incomes rising and our rice fields will not be empty and destroyed."*

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## OXFAM'S RESPONSE IN NUMBERS



**33M**  
money raised



**6,604**  
tarpaulins and shelter repair kits



**253**  
staff



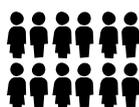
**5,932**  
farmers received rice seed



more than  
**300**  
local volunteers



**54,646**  
families received cash grants  
or cash for work



**547,000**  
people supported



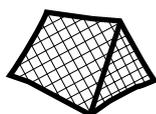
**3,384**  
toilets were built or repaired



**62,866**  
hygiene kits



more than  
**200,000**  
people given access to clean water



**8,108**  
mosquito nets

\* Note: some people received more than one form of support.

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