

Oxfam Water for Survival

Bougainville Water and Sanitation Programme



In 2009, in Bougainville, Oxfam is setting up a new programme to provide improved access to clean water supplies and sanitation, as well as providing hygiene education to local communities.

Background

The copper mining that began in Bougainville in 1972 provided a major source of income for the government of Papua New Guinea following independence in 1975. But the Panguna mining operation was criticised for sharing few of the benefits with local people. And although it created many jobs, it also caused major environmental and social damage.

Dissatisfaction and anger boiled over into armed revolt which escalated into a civil war that lasted from 1989 to 1998. Tens of thousands of lives were lost and traditional life on the island was destroyed. Whole communities were displaced and traumatised.

The problem

Most people live in rural areas and very few have a safe, secure water supply. Instead, many rely on streams that are contaminated with human and animal waste. This means that children suffer from water-borne diseases and cases of severe diarrhoea are common. Women walk long distances to collect water every day, sometimes two to three hours per day, meaning they have little time and less energy for other income-generating activities.

Who we work with

We have built a partnership with the Bougainville Healthy Communities Programme. Which is an organisation working mainly in the most conflict-affected 'no-go' zone of Bougainville. This programme has the potential to not only supply much needed water and sanitation but to bring communities together, to work co-operatively and build peace. Our other major partner is Tulele Peisa, a support organisation that has formed to relocate the people of the Carteret



Oxfam's work in Bougainville is providing safe water for people living in poverty. **Photo credit:** Cameron Feast/Oxfam

Islands. They have been forced to move because their low-lying atolls are being inundated by salt water.

The local people identify what is needed and assist us in providing it. The team also works directly with district authorities, local builders and village health volunteers, as well as generating employment opportunities for local tradespeople.

Our objectives

This is a new programme in the process of being set up. By June 30, 2010 we aim to:

- Improve access to safe water sanitation and hygiene education.
- Work closely with local government partners, and communities to develop a co-ordinated approach to water, sanitation and hygiene and agree on a common plan.

To support Oxfam Water for Survival:
Call 09 358 5904 or email kari.adams@oxfam.org.nz

What we are doing

Oxfam New Zealand is:

- Supporting community-led construction of gravity-fed water systems and water tanks.
- Implementing a community-led total sanitation process (CLTS) through raising community awareness of the health problems from open defecation, and gaining commitment from all community members to build and use latrines.
- Building the capacity of communities and local organisations to manage and maintain facilities and improved hygiene practices.

What we have achieved so far

New Zealand has played an important role in brokering peace in Bougainville, after the bitter conflict that, by some estimates, resulted in more deaths per head of population than any other conflict of the 20th century. Oxfam was supported by the New Zealand government to establish a peace building programme in 1998. An external evaluation in 2004 found that Oxfam's work had played a major part in building peace in central Bougainville, using livelihoods programmes to reintegrate ex-combatants into their communities. Shortly thereafter, the programme evolved into a strong indigenous organisation, Osi Tanata.

The relationship continued and last year Oxfam partnered with Osi Tanata on water supplies for seven villages. Communities were involved in the design of low-cost systems, providing all the labour, contributing



This water tank in Papua New Guinea is an example of the systems the Oxfam Water for Survival Programme is currently installing in Bougainville. The Bougainville project has already supplied water tanks in seven rural communities and plans are underway to expand the project. **Photo credit:** Pauline Komolong/Oxfam



The Bougainville team load a truck with water tanks and materials ready to deliver water systems to rural communities.

Photo credit: Andy Thomson/Oxfam

funding, undertaking health and hygiene training and developing maintenance plans. The resulting access to clean water and improved sanitation not only prevented sickness from disease, but also stimulated new work opportunities, including cooking classes and a bakery.

The response from other communities has been enthusiastic, prompting the development of this new phase of work, reaching out to more communities and engaging with local government.

The Christchurch Pledge

The city of Christchurch has made a massive commitment to Oxfam's Water for Survival by aiming to raise \$60,000 for the Bougainville programme in 2009-2010. This is a significant target and will make an invaluable difference to access to safe water for rural communities in Bougainville.

To support the Christchurch Challenge, please contact 0800 400 666 or visit www.oxfam.org.nz/water and follow the links to the 'Christchurch for Bougainville' fundraising page.

On behalf of the communities we work with, we would like to thank the city of Christchurch for their commitment to Water for Survival

What we need

Oxfam and our partners have committed to raise NZ\$60,000 to help set up this programme.

For further information please contact Kari Adams, Oxfam Water Partnerships Manager, on 09 358 5904 or kari@oxfam.org.nz.

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