

Oxfam Water for Survival

Tanzania Water and Sanitation Programme

Oxfam New Zealand is working to improve the health and quality of life of some of the poorest rural communities in the Tabora region of Tanzania. We are doing this through the provision of sustainable and improved water supply, sanitation, and hygiene education services.

Background

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world and 80 per cent of the population depend on subsistence farming. The country is laden with huge external debt, a large part of which dates from inappropriate multilateral loans in the 1960s and 1970s which had no sustainable benefits. Unfortunately, the burden of repaying these debts means that less is spent on education or health care.

Tanzania is bordered by three of Africa's largest lakes, yet ironically there is a severe lack of access to reliable, clean water supplies. Droughts are common, and in the Tabora Region available natural water resources are limited to seasonal streams. Rural populations are hugely vulnerable to the effects of malaria and diarrhoea due to the poor quality of available water and lack of good sanitation.

The challenge

It is estimated that 70 per cent of the rural population in Tanzania does not have access to clean, safe water and there is little sanitation in rural areas. Tabora is one of the worst served regions in Tanzania in terms of water supply and sanitation; less than 15 per cent of rural households in Tabora have access to safe water sources.

Communicable diseases such as malaria, acute respiratory infections and diarrhoea are common and are linked to the lack of clean and safe water,



A woman in Kashishi village returns from the metered water point with water for her family and neighbours for the day. Before Oxfam started working in the area, women and children often walked five kilometres a day to reach the nearest water point.

Photo credit: Kate Medicott/Oxfam

unhygienic practices and poor environmental sanitation. Women and girls walk long distances of up to five kilometres to fetch water from unprotected hand dug wells where they have long queuing times. This means they have little time to spend on activities such as attending school, or generating income by growing vegetable gardens.

Who we work with

The Oxfam Water for Survival Programme is working with WaterAid UK and local partners to provide water and sanitation for 4500 people living in poverty in Tabora region. The community is involved in all stages from planning through to implementation to enhance

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community ownership of the facilities and to ensure the project's sustainability.

Our objectives

This is a three year programme. In 2009-2010 we aim to:

- Increase access to safe, adequate and affordable water supplies within a walking distance of one kilometre in three villages, serving approximately 4500 people by March 2010.
- Improve hygiene education and behaviour in three villages with respect to safe water handling and hand washing.
- Strengthen the capacity of communities in the Uyumbu ward to plan, develop, operate and sustainably manage their water and hygiene projects.

What we are doing

Oxfam New Zealand and WaterAid UK are working to improve the water supply and sanitation facilities in the Tabora region. This work includes:

- Constructing and developing sanitation facilities and water points. We use simple technology solutions, such as boreholes and hand dug wells fitted with hand pumps. These are easy to maintain, and also reduce the time spent extracting water compared to the previous rope and bucket mechanisms.



Collecting the daily water from a hand-pump in the Somgambele ward. This is one of the 11 boreholes fitted with a hand-pump installed by Oxfam and WaterAid. **Photo credit:** Kate Medicott/Oxfam

- Providing community health education to raise awareness of the importance of clean water and sanitation to enhance personal, economic and social development.
- Working with community members to ensure they have the lead role in the management of water and sanitation facilities. This will foster community ownership of the work and ensure the sustainability of the project.

What we have achieved so far

- 11 boreholes have been successfully drilled and fitted with hand pumps, serving 3300 people.
- 11 local water committees have been established, and have been given the skills and capacity to operate, manage and maintain the water points and sanitation facilities. 22 pump attendants have been trained to look after the boreholes and hand pumps - that's two attendants for every water point.
- We have trained 28 'sanitation artisans' - labourers who are able to construct and maintain latrines.
- Ten teachers from two primary schools have been trained in the importance of good hygiene and sanitation practices, and are able to impart their knowledge to the students and the wider community.
- In addition to the general improvements in access to clean and safe water, there have been positive improvements in the reduction of water borne diseases, and an improvement in school attendance by children who were previously tasked with collecting water.

What we need

This year, Oxfam has committed to raise NZ\$170,000 for this ambitious and important programme.

For further information please contact oxfam@oxfam.org.nz or call 0800 400 666.

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