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Pic: Penny Tweedie/OxfamAUS

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On the campaign trail

Blog Action Day 2010: Water

By Tim Norton

Today, Friday October 15th is Blog Action Day – a day when thousands of online communicators, campaigners, bloggers, commentators and activists come together to talk about one important topic. This year, that topic is WATER, and it's something we at Oxfam are concerned about, and working on.

We all need fresh, clean accessible water for drinking and for cooking, only some of us have to go to the limits of human endurance to get it. Right now a staggering one billion people are forced to use dirty water for their daily needs.

Unclean water, poor sanitation and unsafe hygiene practices have claimed more lives over the past century than any other cause – and this is continuing in many developing countries – making this one of the world's most urgent health issues.

Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns are affecting farmers' crops. By 2020 yields from rain-fed agriculture in Africa could be down by 50%. Water supply is now so acutely challenged that several major cities that are dependent on the Himalayan and Andes glaciers will face crippling shortages within decades.

What is Oxfam doing about this?

Rice paddy water use

Oxfam's promotion of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in programs in east and south Asia, including Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. This production method of the main staple food for these regions uses less water, less seed stock, less chemical fertiliser and pesticides, and generally results in increased yields of rice, which can be up to 50 – 100%. This ecological based farming practice spaces rice plants further apart, uses compost and other organic fertilisers, and because it only keeps rice paddy soil moist rather than flooded, uses 25 – 50% less water. The efficient use of water resources is a critical adaptation to climate change, with water efficient farming being a key part of this.

Learning to swim

In many countries prone to flooding, women in particular are at increased risk of drowning as they are less likely to be taught how to swim. Oxfam's disaster risk reduction work in Vietnam has included swimming classes, including women and children as a response to increased flooding risk from climate change.

[Check out some more info about this program here.](#)

» Blogs

Adidas: Stop wearing us out

Will adidas keep its promises and respect the rights of the people who make its shoes?

Climate of change

Climate change affects everyone, but it's affecting poor people in developing countries the most.

Educators shaping change

Ideas, resources and tools for bringing social justice and active citizenship into the classroom.

Emergency 365

When disaster strikes around the world, we move quickly to provide life-saving assistance.

In My Shoes

A journey through the life of a 24-year-old footwear factory worker.

In the field

Follow stories from communities we're working with around the world.

Labour rights: behind the seams

Supporting the human rights of workers

On the campaign trail

Stay up to date with Oxfam's various campaigns.

Penh Diaries

I'm Dustin (from Melbourne) volunteering with Oxfam through AusAID's VIDA program.

Rights in crisis

We work with people around the world, affected by conflict and disaster.

Youth: 3things movement

News and views from the 3things team

» Location



Timor Leste climate change adaptation program

This new program will work with communities to identify the key climate change risks, which anecdotal stories already are talking about changing rainfall patterns – with more rain in the dry seasons, more intensive rains and hotter temperatures. All of this can play havoc with local water management and supply (for farming, health and hygiene purposes), increases risks of flooding and landslides in this mountainous country. We will work with communities to find ways they can adapt to these changes and manage the risk.

Oxfam's Global WASH Portfolio

Oxfam is funded by AusAID for around A\$5m to deliver improved access to safe sufficient supplies of water in more than 100 remote rural communities in 6 countries: Timor Leste, Bangladesh, PNG, Cambodia, Mozambique and Zambia. This group of counties is already suffering from the impacts of climate changes on the availability and quality of their water sources including drought, flooding, sea level rises and the increased intensity and number of natural disasters such as hurricanes and tropical storms. The impact on their health is made worse by the lack of latrines leading to open defecation and direct contact with excreta which increases their disease burden. Oxfam is not only providing clean water, but it is also ensuring that the communities have access to latrines and learn about the importance of good hygiene behaviors such as hand washing with soap or ash after contact with defecation.

[Read more about this program here.](#)

So, what can you do?

Help us deliver safe water to Papua New Guinea

In the East Sepik region in Papua New Guinea, families literally live on the water. They fish in it, they wash in it and they drink it ... yet they also go to the toilet in it.

In February 2010 cholera hit the region. As an acute intestinal infection (caused by contaminated food and water) it spread fast — taking lives, and making whole communities very sick. To stop the spread of cholera in PNG we're distributing water catchments and hygiene kits containing soap, oral rehydration salts and buckets.

The Oxfam bucket not only helps families store clean water but also keeps it safe. A tight-fitting lid ensures flies are kept out, and a tap prevents water becoming contaminated by dirty hands. By [donating to the Oxfam Water Appeal](#), you can help families access clean and safe water and prevent the spread of the disease through good hygiene practises.

- [Donate to the Oxfam Water Appeal](#)

Protect a family in Cambodia

Turning on a tap and drinking water is second nature to us. You can help protect people from sickness by providing them with a water filter jar. These nifty devices are a hygienic way to store and filter water and stop any nasty bugs getting in. And [at only \\$14](#), that's a present we can all drink to!

A simple but effective water filter jar provides disadvantaged families in Cambodia with safe water to drink and cook with. The water filter jar significantly reduces the prevalence of life-threatening disease, such as diarrhoea, in communities where clean water supplies are hard to come by. "I collect water from the river every morning. The water that I collect I boil then put through the water filter jar because I'm afraid of bacteria and disease. Now that I boil water and have a water filter jar my health is better." Mrs Sok Bun, Stung Treng province, Cambodia

- [Give the gift of a water filter jug](#)

Get involved in Blog Action Day

You've still got time to take part in [this global day of action!](#)

Write a post on your own blog, comment on the thousands popping up around the world or just read more about the importance of providing clean, safe drinking water to every person on the planet.

This post is part of [Blog Action Day 2010](#)

Tags: [Water](#)

previous post: Thank you Josie!

next post: Surrounded by a river of cholera: Part 1

This entry was posted on Friday, October 15th, 2010 at 9:00 am and is filed under [On the campaign trail](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

➤ GROW with us

GROW A BETTER WAY – HAVE YOUR SAY!

"Food grown well and sold fresh and cooked lovingly is usually good for you and the environment"



Matthew Evans
Author of *The Real Food Companion*

WHAT DO YOU THINK? TAKE THE FOOD POLL TODAY!

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➤ Take Action

Want to change your world?

There are many ways to help our work around the globe. From signing a petition, to writing a letter, and even creating your own campaign - it all starts [here](#).



➤ About the author

Stay up to date with Oxfam's various campaigns. Learn more about our activities, find out about upcoming events, take action, and otherwise be part of making our world a better place.

➤ Twitter updates



Australian mining interests in PNG threaten one of the world's most diverse, beautiful

2 Responses to “Blog Action Day 2010: Water”



Dave Lucas says:

[October 15, 2010 at 10:26 pm](#)

Proud to be part of the team!

<http://dave-lucas.blogspot.com/2010/10/blog-action-day-2010-resource-we-take.html>

[Reply](#)



Lions Clubs International says:

[October 16, 2010 at 3:34 am](#)

Great post about water issues! Our members are working to provide clean water and change lives in Africa: <http://lionsclubsorg.wordpress.com/>

[Reply](#)

marine ecosystems. <http://ow.ly/5vU2J> 1 hour ago



RT @OxfamAustralia: In the aftermath of the Bonn #climate talks, @ClancyMoore reports on progress so far: <http://oxf.am/4qh> 2011/06/24

No public Twitter messages.

Leave a Reply

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- ▶ Make Poverty History
- ▶ Fair Trade
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