Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most powerful storms in recorded history, left a trail of wreckage in its wake. Oxfam and partners are helping families protect their health and begin to earn a living once again.

**B E F O R E  T H E  S T O R M**

A storm of Haiyan’s immensity would pose a hardship for any nation. But this typhoon is only the latest in a series of crises affecting the Philippines. For the island nation, home to an estimated 96.5 million people, 2013 was a year of disaster: a magnitude 7.2 earthquake in Bohol province that displaced more than 300,000 people; a storm that wiped out rice harvests worth millions of pesos; and a deadly standoff between the military and rebel forces that left hundreds dead and thousands homeless in September.

The Philippine Islands are located in the seismic “ring of fire,” which leaves them vulnerable to earthquakes and landslides. Compounding those natural events are ongoing civil conflicts in the Mindanao region, which have forced approximately two million people to leave their homes since the 1960s. And for Filipinos, breaking free from poverty and building a secure future becomes even tougher when high levels of government debt continue to hamper economic growth.

Like most disasters, Haiyan hit the poorest and most vulnerable people hardest. The affected provinces are poorer than the national average, with about four out of 10 families living below the poverty line. The average household income in Eastern Visayas, which includes the hard-hit areas of Samar and Leyte, is about $3,400 a year. Many people there are small-scale farmers.

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Oxfam America is a global organization working to right the wrongs of poverty, hunger, and injustice. As one of the 17 members of the international Oxfam confederation, we work with people in more than 90 countries to create lasting solutions. Oxfam saves lives, develops long-term solutions to poverty, and campaigns for social change. To join our efforts or learn more, go to oxfamamerica.org.

--Michael Delaney, director of humanitarian response for Oxfam America
What can you do to help?

Donate now to help devastated communities in the Philippines rebuild and recover: oxfamamerica.org/haiyan

Many storms have passed here. But we did not expect a storm that brought a ‘tsunami’ with it. We only know of rain and wind. We did not expect the sea would devour the land.

— A mother of two small children describing her experience of the storm to Oxfam

or fishermen, or earn their livings from low-paying jobs and microenterprises in the towns and cities.

The Philippines will continue to face multiple and possibly simultaneously occurring emergencies because of its exposure to natural hazards (it is the third most risk-prone country in the world) and its high rate of poverty.

FIRST DAYS OF THE RESPONSE

The destructive force of Typhoon Haiyan was almost indescribable. The storm flattened entire communities, reducing them to piles of rubble, and left vital roadways blocked with debris.

Oxfam teams on the ground quickly began distributing vital supplies like soap and blankets, building emergency latrines, and improving access to clean drinking water. In the hard-hit city of Tacloban, we helped restore clean running water to more than 200,000 people within days of the storm.

WHAT OXFAM IS DOING

Along with protecting public health, Oxfam and partners are working to ensure that survivors have access to food and have a way of generating incomes so they can supply their own needs.

WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES:

- Repaired water networks
- Installed large water storage tanks and tap stands
- Provided mobile water treatment units, with generators and fuel to run them
- Built latrines and washing facilities, with separate areas for women and men
- Distributed blankets; water-purification kits; hygiene materials like soap, toothbrushes, and underwear; and special kits for mothers of newborns

FOOD AND WORK:

- Helping people feed their families—sometimes in exchange for accomplishing critical tasks like removing debris and building latrines
- Helped ensure the next rice harvest by supplying seeds and supporting communities to clear agricultural land
- Provided sawmills and chain saws to turn uprooted coconut trees into lumber for rebuilding

BEHIND THE SCENES:

- Helping ensure that government aid efforts are safe, fair, and effective.
- Successfully advocating for improved living conditions in government temporary housing projects