

TROPICAL CYCLONE PAM

ONE MONTH ON – RESPONSE UPDATE



OXFAM

AN OXFAM OVERVIEW...

- ⊗ **Over 150,000L of clean water** provided to 6 communities in and around Port Vila
- ⊗ **Over 1200 Hygiene Kits** delivered across Ambrym and Efate islands
- ⊗ **Four communities** in Port Vila benefitting through income support activities
- ⊗ **Over 15,000 people** reached through Oxfam's WASH and EFSVL work
- ⊗ **1/3** of Ambrym reached with hygiene kits and water supply rehabilitation



Children in the community of Etas enjoy the clean water delivered by Oxfam. Clean water is a key priority for affected populations.
Photo: Amy Christian/Oxfam Australia

APRIL 13 MARKS ONE MONTH SINCE TROPICAL CYCLONE PAM TORE THROUGH VANUATU. Tropical Cyclone Pam struck Vanuatu on the evening of March 13, 2015, causing widespread destruction across the eastern and south eastern islands of the country. The eye of the category 5 cyclone passed close to Efate island, the location of Vanuatu's capital Port Vila, affecting 166,000 people across 22 islands. 15,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, up to 96 percent of food stocks decimated and the water supply of 110,000 disrupted, destroyed or contaminated.

The response to TC Pam began immediately after the storm left Vanuatu's borders. Throughout the last month over 50 organisations, both local and international, have worked together under the lead of the Government of Vanuatu to ensure relief efforts are coordinated and aid is getting those who need it most.

Across the response so far 25,000 people have received hygiene kits, meaning that these people have access to basic – but necessary – items such as buckets, soap and towels. 50,000 people have received emergency shelter assistance, including tarpaulins which can provide roofing, temporary walls or privacy screens and act as a crucial rainwater catchment device in those areas with no other source of water. Emergency food assistance to reach 180,000 people has been delivered, with another 800 metric tonnes being prepared for distribution across the affected islands.

OXFAM's program involves:

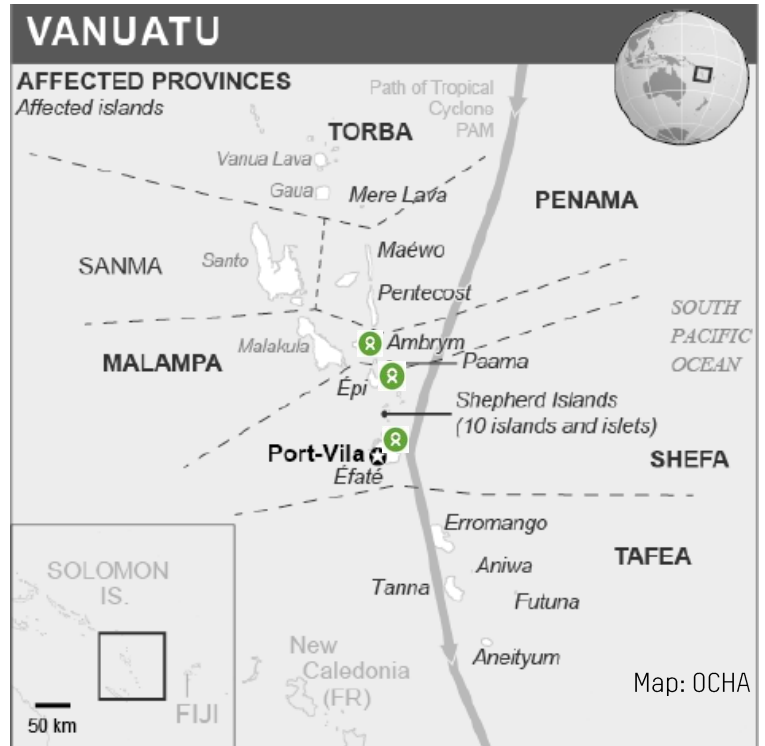
- **WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)** – Provision of clean water, rehabilitation of water sources, hygiene promotion and distribution of hygiene kits
- **EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY AND VULNERABLE LIVELIHOODS (EFSVL)** – Immediate and medium-term livelihoods support in rural and peri-urban areas to increase food security
- **COORDINATION** – Oxfam coordinates the **Vanuatu Humanitarian Team**, representing humanitarian agencies in the country and providing **co-ordination** support to the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).

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PROVIDING CLEAN WATER

Oxfam's WASH response is focusing on both immediate water supply and long-term rehabilitation of water sources. By taking this approach, people are provided with clean water, plus we ensure they have ongoing access. When the life-saving phase of the emergency response passes, it's critical that communities are provided with sustainable solutions that will help them recover and, importantly, be better prepared for the next cyclone.

So far, Oxfam has provided over 150,000L of clean water to 6 communities on Efate through water trucking. Using new taps, pipes and pumps, our public health engineers (PHEs) are in the process of restoring the water supply to communities on Efate and Ambrym islands. In some cases this means pumping contaminated water out of wells and re-filling them with clean water, while in others it involves the replacement of broken pipes or taps.



HYGIENE PROMOTION

Distributing hygiene kits is one way that Oxfam promotes good hygiene in communities. In the first month of the response, our teams have supplied over 1200 hygiene kits to affected households on Ambrym and Efate, reaching approximately 6000 people with basic necessities.

In Vanuatu, Oxfam is working with long-term partner Wan Smolbag Theatre to present plays promoting good hygiene and health promotion to communities in which hygiene kit distribution and other WASH activities are being carried out. The theatre group's performances will be complemented by the distribution of educational materials on good sanitation practice.



Gideon Lamar (27) with his wife Aileen (26) and son John (5) were staying in an evacuation centre when they received a hygiene kit from Oxfam. "Thank you so much for coming here today and giving us these things, we are really thankful".

Photo:
Amy Christian/OxfamAUS

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Peter, from Utas in South East Ambrym, makes kava with roots that survived the cyclone. Photo: Amy Christian/OxfamAUS



Helen Joseph, 43, shows the remains of her house that was destroyed by the cyclone. Epau Village, Efate. Photo: Amy Christian/OxfamAUS

PERI-URBAN LIVELIHOODS

In some contexts, such as urban centres, providing communities with relief items is not always the best way to support the rebuilding of the local economy. The needs of the population vary widely, so Oxfam is assisting households so that they can prioritise their own needs.

Oxfam is running a cash-for-work program in peri-urban Port Vila to supplement income, beginning with a pilot program of 54 people. Those involved in the program will carry out debris clearance and solid waste disposal in return for cash payment. The program will run over a period of 2 weeks per group, and in the longer term Oxfam is exploring partnerships to re-start small businesses lost to the cyclone.

FOOD SECURITY & REBUILDING LIVELIHOODS

According to assessments carried out post-Pam, food supply and income are two priority areas for affected communities. The vast majority of gardens and crops were destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Pam, including those that many communities rely on as cash crops.

One month after the cyclone local markets are starting to show signs of activity – both with small, fast-yielding crops grown locally and those shipped in from neighbouring islands and countries. Fresh and nutritious domestic produce is still extremely hard to come by, and the small amount that is available is priced far too high for most to be able to afford it as they are forced to prioritise remaining finances.

In Oxfam's program area of South East Ambrym, kava and copra were the two main cash crops that communities relied on for income. With most of the crops destroyed, many families will have to replant and wait several months before even the fastest growing crops are harvestable.

In partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Oxfam will be distributing seeds to communities on the outer islands to kick start their gardens and diversify the local market. Along with seeds, we will be giving out kits including gardening and other tools to support the rehabilitation of gardens and crops.

VOUCHERS

In addition to cash-for-work programming, Oxfam is establishing a voucher system through which vouchers distributed can be exchanged at specified local retailers for materials. We're developing partnerships with three hardware stores in Port Vila to support the top-up of hygiene and tool kits received from Oxfam.

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GENDER & PROTECTION

Government-led assessments have highlighted a range of protection issues that humanitarian actors need to be aware of throughout the response – some that have been caused by Tropical Cyclone Pam and some that have been exacerbated by it. Assessments found that female headed households were most affected by the cyclone, as well as persons with disabilities and older persons. Gender-based violence is a pre-existing issue that has the potential to be intensified due to the stresses brought on by the cyclone, and damage to key infrastructure has meant that in many places women now have to travel long distances to access water and health care.

As a member of the Vanuatu Civil Society Disability Network, Oxfam has been advocating for the inclusion of disability sensitive programming across the response, including the special needs of persons with disabilities to be included in response plans, for persons with disabilities to be part of assessments and for buildings being rebuilt to ensure disability access.

Oxfam continues to support the Women’s Information Centres which will be opened in three locations on Efate. The Women’s Information Centres are safe spaces for women affected by Tropical Cyclone Pam to access information on the support that is available, including referrals to local services such as health, counselling, shelter and livelihoods support.

VANUATU HUMANITARIAN TEAM (VHT)

Oxfam has been coordinating the VHT since its inception in 2011, supporting humanitarian coordination for both disaster preparedness and response. The VHT is a coordination mechanism of 11 core member agencies based in Vanuatu, including NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross, in support of the Government of Vanuatu and the NDMO. For Tropical Cyclone Pam, however, the number of organisations actively supporting or implementing the humanitarian response has grown to over 50.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Oxfam in Vanuatu has a long history of working with partners to both support our own programs and build the capacity of local organisations. Our TC Pam response is no different – we’re working with local partners Wan Smolbag, Farmer’s Support Association (FSA) and the Diocese of Port Vila/Caritas to increase the reach of our programs across Vanuatu.

Through these partnerships we’re ensuring that our response program is timely, sustainable and contextually appropriate.



“We haven’t seen anyone for a week, since the night of the cyclone. You are the first ones to come here. We are so happy you came; we have been waiting for help. Our wells are contaminated now so we can’t drink that water. We saved some in a tank which is okay, but by next week it will run out.” **JENNY** - Utas village, Ambrym island

Oxfam’s team were the first people to reach South East Ambrym after Tropical Cyclone Pam, bringing with them enough hygiene kits for the entire population of the area. Since that first visit, Oxfam has rehabilitated the local water supply and provided clean water.

Photo: Amy Christian/OxfamAUS