These updates cover emergencies Oxfam is currently responding to around the world, although please note they don’t intend to be comprehensive.

Maghreb & Middle East

Yemen
Fighting on the ground is spreading throughout the country. Air strikes are continuing and more and more civilians are losing their lives to land mines. It’s been more than a week since the port city of Aden, previously a life line for trade and supplies to the whole country, has been closed and life-saving aid cannot reach the country by sea at all. Oxfam is continuing its life-saving water and sanitation activities and working to distribute hygiene and dignity kits as well as essential household items to the most vulnerable families. Our team is monitoring the situation closely and looking to widen our reach as soon as the security situation allows wider access and people are not forced to keep fleeing. We need your help to put pressure for lasting peace in this war-torn country. Join our plea for an immediate and permanent cease fire in Yemen.

Photo: Families fled from Haradd district to Shafa district (Hajja) - after the airstrikes targeted Haradh in May 2015. People wait their turn to take share of the water for their families - Oxfam has provided water tanks and clean drinking water for the displaced, Hind Aleryani, Oxfam 2015

Gaza
Last week (24- 30 August) marks the end of last year’s conflict in Gaza. One year after the devastating bombings of 2014, Gaza is still struggling to move past the conflict. The on-going 8-year blockade makes recovery extremely difficult as people cannot access materials to rebuild their homes, schools and hospitals. People’s ability to rebuild their lives is also severely affected as farms and local businesses hang on for dear life under the blockade. The needs for safe water and food are as pressing as ever. To date, Oxfam has provided life saving water and food assistance to 700,000 people. To learn more about what Oxfam is doing to help people survive and lift themselves out of poverty, please read: Gaza One Year On and a case study on supporting livelihoods through emergency interventions.

West Africa
Nigeria

As the conflict in the North East continues, camps and host communities throughout Nigeria are struggling to cope with the growing demand for food and non-food items. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 4.6 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance to overcome ill health and extreme hunger.

We have been working closely with other organisations to empower internally displaced families to address their needs. Together with local residents and displaced persons, Oxfam is supporting the construction of temporary shelters in informal camps to house those forced to leave their homes. Alongside the distribution of food packages, we also aim to empower displaced persons to tackle food insecurity by providing improved seedlings to those who have been granted land to cultivate by host communities. The improvement of sanitation in the camps which are at risk of outbreaks of diarrhoea and cholera is also a priority. As well as building over 139 latrines and bath spaces in affected areas of Adamawa, Borno and Gombe states, staff are also distributing hygiene kits and delivering hygiene sensitisation activities to promote good health practices. Most IDPs have passed through traumatic experiences which have affected their behaviour and moods. In our interventions, time is devoted for the psychosocial needs of the displaced families. But more is needed to take them out of trauma.

Working in partnership with other organisations, Oxfam has expanded and strength its humanitarian response to reach more than 130,000 people in the states of Adamawa, Gombe and Borno. Watch this video to find out more about Oxfam’s response to the humanitarian situation in Nigeria and like our Facebook Page and follow us on Twitter @oxfaminngeria!

Democratic Republic of Congo

Thousands of people in DRC are living in overcrowded camps and informal settlements in Masisi territory, eastern DRC due to ongoing violence in their home areas. Oxfam is partnering with the University of Buffalo and the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention on a research project to prevent the spread of disease in Rubaya Camp, North Kivu Province. The goal of the project is to come up with innovative ways to encourage wide-spread take up of hand washing with soap in emergency settings. We are working with vulnerable families to establish the key factors that motivate or prevent them from washing their hands regularly. As part of the project, we are installing hand washing stations designed to be user friendly, accessible and as visible as possible. We are also integrating discreet reminders into the designs to bring about a long-term change in people’s habits. The results from this project will be made available shortly and will provide invaluable input into our future work.

Ethiopia

Weather forecasts indicate the El Niño phenomenon will continue to negatively impact rainfall patterns well into 2016. This suggests that Ethiopia is just starting a long emergency stage, which is likely to worsen in the coming months and continue till June 2016. In the peak of this dry season, water sources are drying up. Since February, the country has been struggling with a severe shortage in rainfall, which undermined people’s ability to grow their own food and keep their livestock. Without enough animal feed and barely enough drinking water, people are forced to kill or sell their surviving cattle at a loss. People become increasingly dependent on buying food, but the high demand is driving prices up to the point where the most vulnerable families cannot...
afford to feed themselves. In the Sitiz Zone of Somali Region, Oxfam is providing clean drinking water and supporting communities to keep their livestock. We are looking to scale up this response as soon as possible so we can respond to the growing needs in other regions.

South Sudan
The South Sudanese President’s signing of the peace agreement on 26 August is a crucial step towards ending the 20 months of Civil War, Zlatko Gegic, Country Director for Oxfam in South Sudan said: “This agreement is an important first step towards ending the unbearable suffering of millions of South Sudanese but much more needs to be done to ensure lasting peace and stability. With millions of people hungry, it is crucial that all warring parties respect the agreement, stop fighting immediately and allow lifesaving aid to reach people where they are.”

Continue reading. One in 3 South Sudanese are severely hungry and the needs for clean water and basic shelter are dire. Oxfam is working to prevent the spread of diseases by rehabilitating boreholes, chlorinating water trucking, increasing water treatment infrastructure for bicycle vendors and installing hand-washing facilities. The active participation from communities and local authorities helps to build ownership of these projects and improves peoples’ ability to cope with on-going insecurity.
For the occasion of World Humanitarian Day 2015, 19th of August, some Humanitarian Aid Workers in South Sudan, told us in their own words what makes them humanitarians and what drives them to help others, read their stories here.

Asia and South Asia

Heavy monsoon rains have continued to lash much of southern Asia, threatening further casualties and more destruction after weeks of lethal floods and landslides. Oxfam is assessing humanitarian needs and responding in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Myanmar. Photos: oxfam distribution process and Hygiene promotion session, Myanmar, Oxfam, August 2015

Myanmar
Myanmar is critically affected in the aftermath of cyclone Komen. More than 1.6 million people have been critically affected by floods and landslides during July and August. In the strong floods and landslides, people are losing their lives, homes and agricultural land. The roads and bridges in many areas have been destroyed,
posing a further challenge to accessing the affected communities. Oxfam’s team did an assessment of the needs in 14 villages. People are in urgent need of safe drinking water, sanitation and food assistance. We need all the support we can get to fund the rapid scale up of this response.

India
Over 300,000 people have been affected by the recent floods in Indian states of Manipur and Gujarat and hundreds were displaced and now are in need of humanitarian assistance. Oxfam is on the ground delivering safe water, and ensuring food security through cash transfers to over 18,000 women, men and children in the two states. In Manipur, Oxfam plans to reach around 12,000 people over the next 2 months with emergency food assistance including cash transfer, safe water provisioning and provide critical shelter support in the form of solar lighting. In Gujarat, the main focus of our efforts has been on providing emergency shelter and cash transfer to some of the worst affected villages in Banaskantha and Patan district who have been hit by flash floods and have lost critical productive livelihood assets. Both Banaskantha and Patan are semi arid areas and people were not prepared and were caught unawares by the flash floods.

Bangladesh
On 31st July, cyclone Komen hit the South of the country bringing more extreme weather, taking lives in the powerful floods and destroying thousands of homes and crops. Many of the affected areas are difficult to access due to the ongoing climatic shocks. The extremely poor were hit the hardest and are trapped in the least accessible areas. Oxfam is working with the government to identify the most vulnerable families and reach them with safe drinking water and hygiene kits.

Pakistan
3 weeks of torrential rains caused deadly floods in the South-east of the country, inundating hundreds of villages and destroying agricultural land, roads and bridges on their way. Oxfam is working in partnership with the HELP Foundation and local government to support affected communities with early warning messages, evacuations of people and cattle when the water reaches dangerous levels and distributions of emergency hygiene kits. Preparations are under way to assist vulnerable families who lost their crops and food supplies in the floods.

Nepal
Since the 25th of April Oxfam has reached over 400,000 people with life-saving emergency assistance in the form of access to clean water, construction of latrines, distribution of food, seeds, hygiene and shelter kits. As many of the emergency interventions have finished, such as seed, hygiene kit and emergency shelter distribution the Oxfam team are focusing on providing improved shelter and access to sustainable livelihood solutions. While some communities are very difficult to access with large quantities of relief items Oxfam teams are carrying out mobile surveys to assess needs aiming to deliver tailored assistance meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups. Have a look at our new FB page, share and like it! https://www.facebook.com/pages/Oxfam-in-Nepal/1526652380958572. Photo: Sindhupalchok District Focus group discussion on improved shelter and community needs.

Latin America & the Caribbean

Colombia

http://www.oxfam.org
Tensions between Colombia and Venezuela have resulted in a closure of the border since 21 August. More than 1,000 Colombians have been deported from Venezuela and a further 6,000 have fled. It is estimated that many more Colombians could be forced out of slums and temporary shelters in Venezuela if the crackdown continues. Oxfam is monitoring the situation in Colombia and seeks to support humanitarian work as required.

Nicaragua
The Caribbean coast of Nicaragua is one of the poorest and most vulnerable to hurricanes and volcano eruptions. The Miskito indigenous communities live in extremely fragile homes near rivers and lagoons by the Caribbean coast. Children in these areas face numerous climate and weather related risks, including being carried away by strong currents of flood water on their way to school. Oxfam is working in partnership with other NGOs to provide training on essential survival skills to Miskito and Creole children in disaster prone areas. As part of the training, school children gain practical first aid and evacuation skills. Eleven-year-old Rubi Ramirez told us a bit about her experience during the training; “I learned how to protect myself and how to protect younger children, because they are unaware of the risks. That’s what I like the most, I like to help my school.” Photo: Group of young people involved in the simulation training, Oxfam, August 2015

Pacific

Vanuatu – Cyclone Pam
The Government of Vanuatu has now declared the response phase of the post-Tropical Cyclone Pam effort to be over and the recovery and reconstruction phase to have begun. In line with the Government directive, Oxfam’s work in Vanuatu is now focussing on recovery efforts across our program islands of Efate, Epi and Emae. Our team has completed assessment of Water and Sanitation in Schools in 21 locations on Epi, with preparation of hardware and materials for installation and distribution to occur in the coming weeks. Surveys and focus group discussions, following our Hygiene programs, have been completed on Efate and Epi to assess the changes in knowledge, attitudes and practice brought about by Oxfam’s hygiene promotion activities. We have also established five vegetable demonstrations plots for training on low cost vegetable cultivation techniques, supported by FAO. An assessment has been completed in Efate and Epi in order to understand the remaining food security and livelihood needs of affected communities after the first phase of the response. Photo: Oxfam tanks being loaded onto the Rainbow Warrior to be shipped to Epi, Groovy Banana, Oxfam

Find more information on the above emergency programs and our other responses: http://www.oxfam.org/en/emergencies
If you need pictures in high resolution or have any questions please contact federica.mastroianni@oxfaminternational.org.

http://www.oxfam.org