

GOOD CITIZENSHIP

Helping The World's Poorest

(NAPSA)—A year ago, the world came together to help victims of a tsunami that devastated South Asia. It was the largest humanitarian response in history.

As a result, two months after the disaster, there were no large-scale outbreaks of disease and no widespread food shortages. In that short time, the area recovered to the point that it was already possible for rebuilding work to begin. In the first week of the disaster, the aid effort was led by local people and local organizations that responded to the needs of the survivors. In each of the countries affected, large sections of the public mobilized in response to the disaster.

Since the tsunami, Oxfam has helped more than 1.8 million people in South Asia and raised more than \$250 million to support its aid effort across the tsunami-affected countries. Oxfam's humanitarian program is providing water and sanitation and working on shelter and livelihood projects.

"Our international experience has taught us that it is usually the poor who are hardest hit. They are usually the first to get hit and the last to get help," said Oxfam America president Ray Offenheiser. "This year, we saw that in our own backyard with Hurricane Katrina."

Katrina cut a wide swath across the Gulf Coast and Mississippi Delta, reaching beyond the urban centers and deep into rural areas where some of the most profound and entrenched poverty in the nation exists. The hurricane



Victims of both the tsunami in Asia and of Katrina relied on humanitarian aid.

ripped roofs off houses, knocked out power, blocked roads and flattened farmers' fields, leaving already-marginalized people homeless and with no means to support themselves.

Although Oxfam generally focuses its emergency response on regions where governments and civil society groups have little or no capacity to respond effectively, which is seldom the case in the United States, the devastation in the Gulf Coast region led the organization to launch a rebuilding effort there as well. The hundreds of thousands of people severely affected by Hurricane Katrina include many people—mostly poor, rural people of color—associated with the grassroots organizations with which Oxfam America has long-standing relationships.

Learn more at www.oxfam-america.org.