

agency news

Howard Davies/Oxfam



Kosovan refugees collect water from an Oxfam tapstand in Stankovic 2 camp, Macedonia.

Oxfam

On the eve of the NATO bombings on 24 March, Oxfam staff were evacuated from the Kosovan capital, Pristina. Despite the uncertain situation, the Oxfam team began planning a water and sanitation programme, to be implemented immediately on its return to the region. It was this planning which allowed Oxfam to set up a water supply for 30 000 refugees in Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, within 48 hours of arrival. Oxfam has gone on to assist over 120 000 refugees in five large camps in Macedonia.

In Albania, Oxfam's 90-strong programme team has provided water and sanitation facilities to 200 000 refugees across the country, and distributed hygiene kits to 80 000 refugees on a monthly basis. In Kukës, near the Kosovan border, Oxfam has been supplying 350 000 litres of drinking-water every day from a nearby spring to one camp, and is in the process of installing a water system to extract and treat approximately 600 000 litres of water per day from Kukës lake to the other camp.

Oxfam has worked in the Balkans since 1994, with water and sanitation, disability and community services programmes. The challenge for Oxfam now is to maintain its commitment to continue to assist all refugees in Macedonia and Albania, in a flexible and efficient way, in order to allow resources to be deployed in re-establishing its programme in Kosovo, where Oxfam will provide water and sanitation facilities, community services and assistance to people with disabilities.

WaterAid

WaterAid plans to expand its work to take advantage of new funding. The three new areas are:

- Full-scale programmes in Madagascar and Malawi. The new country representatives will seek to establish long-term relationships with partners to implement and advocate integrated water-supply projects. There will also be pilot projects in Burkina Faso and Mali.
- Work is also expanding in urban areas, with the appointment of a UK-based urban specialist. WaterAid plans to support projects with established urban sector organizations in Addis Ababa, Dar Es Salaam, India and Nepal. Urban-based projects are also planned in Francophone Africa and Latin America.
- Finally, WaterAid has decided to support its partners in carrying out impact assessments of older projects in India, Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanzania; this is intended primarily as a learning exercise, both for WaterAid and its partners.

ActionAid

Five years ago, civil conflict in Burundi led to massive loss of life and displacement; a further impact in the Ruyigi province was the almost total destruction of their water-supply system. Now, as civil society starts to return to normal, the local community has made access to clean water a priority need. To this end, ActionAid is helping local people to protect springs, and to rehabilitate piped water schemes.

To date, 147 springs have been protected and one large gravity system rehabilitated; benefiting nearly 19 000 people. In addition, the average walking distance to collect water has been reduced to 0.5km in 24 **collines** (districts). ActionAid is also working to strengthen the capacity of community water committees to manage the completed waterpoints in a sustainable manner, and to involve the government ministry responsible for water and sanitation and local administrators in complementing community efforts to maintain the waterpoints.

Information from Clare Fairclough. E-mail: <claref@actionaid.org.uk>

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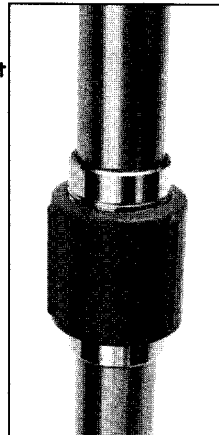
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Dutch Government

Citing lack of good governance, stalled constitutional reform, and failure to act against corruption, in June, the Dutch government cut its US\$25 million (EUR 23.8m) bilateral development assistance to Kenya. Affected projects include the rural water supply and sanitation programme (EUR 1m), and the drought-monitoring programme (EUR 1m). The Government will continue to support the activities of Dutch co-financed agencies.