

The Philippines: facts and figures



Nomoy Regalado / Oxfam

above Tugas village, Danao bay is typical of the small settlements that line the coast of the Philippines

Area: 29,817,000 ha
Population: 69.26 million (1995)
Percentage of population living in urban areas: 45.7
Population growth rate: 2.07%
Gross Domestic Product (GDP): 1905.3 billion pesos
GDP growth (1995): 4.9%
GDP per capita: \$1,083
Total external debt: \$42.2 billion (1995)
Debt servicing as percentage of export revenues: 13%
Net inward investment from abroad: \$2.4 billion (1995)
Remittances from Philippine nationals working abroad: \$4 billion per year
Uncollected taxes: Approximately \$3 billion per year
Adult literacy: 90%
Life expectancy at birth: 65
Infant mortality 1990-5 projection: 40 per 1,000 live births
Under 5 mortality: 62 per 1,000
Religion: 85% Catholic; 4% Protestant; remainder Muslim or Animist.
Currency conversion: \$1 = P26.18 (September 1996)

Sources

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Oxfam in the Philippines

Oxfam (United Kingdom and Ireland) has been funding projects in the Philippines for more than 20 years but an office was set up only ten years ago, shortly after the downfall of the Marcos regime.

In a country with tens of thousands of NGOs and other grassroots initiatives, there has never been a lack of potential partners. It is partly because of this diverse and sizeable NGO community that Oxfam, at an early stage, saw the need to focus on a limited number of causes, targeting groups which still had difficulty articulating their needs, and for whom external funding was largely absent. An early decision was made to focus on groups working with coastal or indigenous communities, or with groups set up by those communities. Women and their gender needs were also identified as a main focus of Oxfam's funding and non-funding support. A major earthquake in the north of the country in 1990, the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1991, made Oxfam decide to work with communities on disaster preparedness and disaster management. The Oxfam programme also involves advice and marketing support for small-scale crafts producers.

Oxfam is now one out of many agencies, both local and international, with a primary concern for fishing communities and indigenous people. Oxfam's long association with these groups has led to a better understanding of such issues as land rights, gender relations and sustainable resource management, hence the important role of non-funding support. Building local capacity on disaster preparedness remains an important component of Oxfam's



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work. In fact, building local capacity is the unifying theme in all of Oxfam's Philippines programme. This ranges from training in leadership skills for women, to the development of effective advocacy strategies to ensure that basic rights of local people are met and that they can have a say in their future.

Further reading

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