



GLOBAL IMPACT

CHARITABLE VENTURES FOR GREATER GIVING



Lights from heaven

Oxfam America

The coastal village of Lende Tovea is located at the epicenter of the earthquake that struck the Indonesian island of Sulawesi in September 2018. It was a town of 468 homes, until 187 came crashing down that day. Seven people died.

Fast action in the wake of disasters can save lives, which is one of the many reasons Oxfam, a Global Impact charity partner, is trying to help local and national organizations and governments become expert first responders. Rather than jump in and lead the way ourselves, we are looking for ways to help people closer to the front lines of emergencies take charge and carry out effective programs. In Indonesia, we are working with the Humanitarian Knowledge Hub, known as JMK, which is a diverse consortium of Indonesian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). It includes groups that specialize in water and sanitation, restoring livelihoods after disasters, protecting children, women's rights, disability inclusion, and more, and its members are scattered across the Indonesian archipelago. In this emergency, the government of Indonesia restricted the access of international aid providers in an effort to ensure that Indonesian groups had a chance to take the lead. With its strong partnership with JMK in place, Oxfam was well positioned to provide support from the sidelines, and we welcomed the challenge of the new paradigm.

“International aid providers have an important role to play in providing resources—including funds, training, and technical support—that can strengthen local and national groups,” says Dino Argianto, Oxfam’s head of humanitarian programs in Indonesia. “But the leadership in emergencies should come from within the country. Domestic groups and governments have the proximity and the knowledge of the cultures, languages, and geography they need to be effective; our job is to be sure they also have specialized knowledge about humanitarian response.”

Just being a member of the group has helped build their confidence, says Siar, a group member who lost her home to the quake. “Now we can go to the beach and have fun.”

They have a name for themselves: Majelis Ta’lim Nurul Jannah, which means “the lights from Heaven.”