

The New York Times

Qatar Grants Millions in Aid to New Orleans

By Stephanie Strom, May 2, 2006
Correction Appended

The nation of Qatar plans to announce today roughly \$60 million in grants to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina, including \$17.5 million to Xavier University of Louisiana, the only historically black Catholic university in the United States.

Other beneficiaries are Tulane University, Children's Hospital in New Orleans, Habitat for Humanity, Louisiana State University and the March of Dimes.

Nasser Bin Hamad M. al-Khalifa, Qatar's ambassador to the United States, said the remainder of the \$100 million his country had pledged would be assigned in the coming months.

"Hurricane Katrina was so devastating that everyone in Qatar and the rest of the world felt a responsibility to really act," Mr. Khalifa said. More than 50 countries donated money, expertise and materials, according to a tally by Foreign Policy, a magazine published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Qatar was one of several Persian Gulf nations to donate tens of millions of dollars. Saudi Arabia, for instance, gave more than \$100 million, and the United Arab Emirates pledged \$100 million.

Poor nations also donated. Less than a year after the Indian Ocean tsunami engulfed it, Sri Lanka gave \$25,000 to the American Red Cross. Bangladesh gave \$1 million, Cyprus \$50,000, Ghana \$15,000 and the Dominican Republic \$50,000.



Part of the Tulane campus in New Orleans was submerged by floodwaters after Hurricane Katrina. Tulane will get \$10 million from Qatar. Pool photo by David J. Phillip

European countries tended to offer expertise, supplies and equipment instead of money. Denmark, for example, donated blankets, water purification units and first aid kits.

Many donor countries funneled their gifts through the State Department or other government agencies. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, for instance, used \$66 million of foreign assistance to underwrite Katrina Aid Today, a consortium of nine religion-based and secular relief organizations led by the United Methodist Committee on Relief that is using the money to offer case management services to 100,000 families for two years.

The Department of Education now controls \$60 million donated by foreign governments that it said it would disburse to organizations to rebuild classrooms and libraries, buy books and maybe even pay teachers' salaries.

"We want to give the money where it will have the greatest impact so the foreign governments can see how their funds are being used," said Valerie Smith, an Education Department spokeswoman.

Countries also gave money to the American Red Cross and to the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund, the charity set up by former Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton.

Qatar elected to distribute its money directly, rather than rely on an intermediary.

Ambassador Khalifa said the country wanted to insure transparency and accountability.

"Our past experience is that while you can give to any organization or to a government," he said, "you have no control over the money and then you discover the people most affected have not benefited."



The father of an Xavier student removed belongings from her dormitory after the storm. Qatar has granted \$17.5 million to the university. Adam Nadel/Polaris, for *The New York Times*

To identify projects Qatar might want to support, the ambassador and his representatives talked to relief organizations, educators, members of Congress and other experts, and some embassy staff members traveled to the region.

Mr. Khalifa also drafted former Secretary of State James A. Baker; Laura D'Andrea Tyson, dean of the business school at the University of California, Berkeley, and a former economic

adviser to President Clinton; Lee Raymond, former chief executive of the Exxon Mobil Corporation; and John J. DeGioia, the president of Georgetown University, to serve as an advisory board.

Qatar is giving Xavier, which is in New Orleans, \$12.5 million to add 60,000 square feet to its College of Pharmacy so it can increase enrollment. The gift has additional benefits, the ambassador said, because it will provide construction jobs and because students from the university work in community clinics.

Xavier will also get \$5 million for scholarships for students affected by the disaster.

"It's going to allow us to help those students to finish their educations," said Norman C. Francis, Xavier's president. "That's important because Xavier is the No. 1 producer of African-American graduates in the natural sciences, and those students then go on to get admitted to medical school."

Tulane will receive \$10 million to help undergraduate students from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama who were affected by Hurricane Katrina, as well as students from those states entering the university next fall.

"The money will follow those students all the way through to graduation," said Scott S. Cowen, the university's president. "We anticipate over four years it will support roughly 300 students."

Qatar's \$5.3 million gift was the biggest Children's Hospital has ever received, said Steve Worley, its president. The hospital will use \$5 million to establish the Qatar Cares Fund, which it will use to underwrite medical care for needy children whose families were affected by the hurricane. The remaining \$351,000 will go toward restoring the two of the hospital's five primary care clinics that were left standing after the storm.

"It's hard to know how to express our gratitude," Mr. Worley said.

Correction: May 3, 2006

An article yesterday about grants by Qatar for the victims of Hurricane Katrina included an outdated affiliation for Laura D'Andrea Tyson, a member of a board that is advising that country on relief projects. She is dean of the London Business School. (She left the business school at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2002.)