

On the SPOT

**NEWSLETTER
October 2006**

1. Africa

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Malteser International team explores African ‘terra incognita’

Even in the 21st century, there are still landscapes existing which are regarded as inaccessible. One of those areas is Mulungu, a part of the province of South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the midst of the jungle, however, there are people living. During the past ten years of war in their country, these people were totally cut off from any health care or nutrition care. This even permitted illnesses to outlast which do not occur in other places. As a result, the death toll in Mulungu is assumed to be higher than in the Sudanese war-torn province of Darfur.



Now, Malteser International aims to implement a basic health care programme in this remote area. The organisation plans to establish a nutrition centre, to supply the provisional health care centres with medicine and mosquito nets and to provide psycho-social care for the victims of sexual aggression. Therefore, a team has already started first assessments in the remote area to explore the conditions. After having landed on the only runway, the group was forced to continue by foot. That's why before starting with the medical work, streets and runways will have to be rehabilitated. Presumably, the next phase of the project will start in the end of November. On the long term, Malteser International will also arrange for vaccinations as the last vaccinations in the area of Mulungu took place in 1998.

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Kenya: Cooperation with Austria guarantees project's continuation

Thanks to the dedicated and detailed preparation by the Grand Priory of Austria of the Sovereign Order of Malta - member association of Malteser International – and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Austrian organisation to implement projects and other rehabilitation and development activities in third countries, a contract was signed between the Republic of Austria and the Sovereign Order of Malta at the State Visit of the Austrian President Dr. Heinz Fischer to the Order on 6 October 2006.



As first common project the one of Malteser International combating HIV/AIDS in four slums of Nairobi was chosen. On the occasion of a meeting of Richard Freiherr von Steeb, Chancellor of the Grand Priory of Austria and Vice-President of Malteser International, and Dr. Georg Nothelle, Head of Malteser International's Africa Desk, they could fix details of this cooperation with the representatives of ADA in Vienna. Hopefully that will be the beginning of a long-lasting and fruitful cooperation.

Thanks to this first-time cooperation between Malteser International and ADA, the work in the health centres in the slums of Kariobangi, Kayole-Soweto and Dandora as well as in the Remand Prisons can proceed for another twelve months until 30

September 2007. Both partners take over 50 percent of the costs, which are 122,000 Euro in total. The local project partner is the Nairobi Health Management Board (NHMB).

Although about half of the population of Nairobi currently lives in slums, these spread only over five percent of the city area. In such crowded parts of the city, hygiene, health care and education are at a very low level, whereas poverty and therefore also prostitution are very high. Correspondingly, the knowledge about HIV/AIDS and protection against infection is very low while the dispersal is very high. For this reason, Malteser International already in 2001 set up projects to fight HIV/AIDS in the slums, to ensure on-site examination and treatment, raise awareness of preventive measures and fight the stigmatisation infected people suffer from. The projects have been continued and expanded ever since.

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2. Asia

Indonesia I: Interim report shows progress of rehabilitation

The villages Lancok and Jambo Timu on Sumatra were hit harshly by the tsunami wave. Therefore, Malteser International in February 2005 in cooperation with the local authorities started a comprehensive village rehabilitation programme. With duration of three years, half of the project's time now has passed by. The project report of September 2006 outlines the progress which was made during the past months:



All 411 houses which were planned in the beginning of the project have been taken over by the house owners already. The construction work for another 85 started on 1st of September. The development of infrastructure is the next important aim: small roads connecting the new houses as well as small centre places to meet or to organise markets are crucial for everyday life in the villages. For this reason, a meeting with experts from GITEC with the purpose to prepare concepts and procedures took place in mid-October.

With the help of micro-credits, the trade becomes revived. An owner of a snack bar, a carpet group, a veils group and a fish trader, who were first supported, already paid back their credits. Hence, three new micro-credits could be given out: this time, one petroleum trader, a shrimp trader and another snack bar were the recipients.

Three lists with applicants show the necessity of the garden project which started in October 2006. Fences and seeds will be distributed among the inhabitants to enable them to plant vegetables themselves. Already since September, young people and others can meet up on a football field: socialising is an important step towards a normal village life.

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Indonesia II: Health care for UN staff handed over to UN

In September, the UN financed project ensuring medical care for UN and NGO employees in the West of Sumatra was successfully completed and handed over to UN responsibility. As last task, the Malteser International team provided advice to the UN agencies regarding the employment of own medical staff. Afterwards, all responsibilities were handed over to the UN.

After the tsunami, the UN and numerous NGOs had become active in Indonesia. In the project regions, however, the staffs are exposed to significant and varied health risks. As access to medical care was missing, Malteser International was subcontracted by UNDP to provide basic health care services for the staff members of UN and NGOs working in this region.

In September 2005, two medical teams, clinic space and ambulances started to be operational in Meulaboh and Banda Aceh. Later on, one of the nurses was sent to stay on Nias Island. The responsibilities of the medical teams included all operations of the UN - at land, at sea or in the air. A 24-hour emergency medical service was arranged as well as regular consultancy hours. Altogether, 2,782 patients were examined from September 2005 until August 2006. 42 patients had to be evacuated to Medan due to the seriousness of their health condition. From March 2006 onwards, the medical teams also offered first aid trainings to the UN employees. 415 participants took the chance to get theoretical and practical lessons about snake bites, burns and basic life support. Thus, they got prepared to react quickly in the right way in case of any incidents.

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Pakistan: One year after the earthquake: Malteser International once more provides winter relief

Despite the extensive aid programmes during the past months, one year after the devastating earthquake in Pakistan on 8 October 2005, ten thousands of victims once again have to rely on external help in order to survive the severe winter. 'In the valleys difficult to access not all the houses are already winterised', explains Klaus Euler, Country Coordinator of Malteser International. 'Only until March 2006, with the weather permitting, these areas could be reached by helicopter. In addition, the fierce monsoon and torrents during summer as well as transport problems due to destroyed streets in the remote mountainous regions hampered the helpers.'

Thus, Malteser International, in cooperation with a local partner organisation, is going to distribute shelters of corrugated iron sheets, gas ovens, blankets as well as household items to 2,600 people in need in Azad Jammu Kashmir before the onset of winter. Their mountain villages are situated partly in an altitude of 2,500 meters, and, once more, these people have to face an extremely cold and long winter. 'At night, the temperature very often drops below -15 degree', Euler says.



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Moreover, mobile medical teams ensuring primary health care services will work in the remote Palas valley during the next winter. 'Up to now, you cannot find any effectively operating health care centres here', Euler reports. 'Due to the malnutrition, many inhabitants – especially women and children - are extremely vulnerable and prone to illnesses.'

Up to now, Malteser International is the only organisation which has started rehabilitation projects in the Palas valley, Kohistan, after the end of the emergency phase. 'The maize seeds we distributed to the 400 farmers in the valley have considerably contributed to the fact that - despite the failed harvest of 2005 - maize could be reaped in October this year. That way, it will also be possible to sow again next spring.' With the rehabilitation of ten water reservoirs during late summer of 2006, Malteser International has already commenced to secure the supply of drinking water. It is planned to expand these measurements after the forthcoming winter.



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Over 73,000 people died in the earthquake of October 8, 2005, in Pakistan. Another 3.5 million became homeless. More than 30,000 victims of the earthquake are still living in camps. Alone in the area of Azad Jammu Kashmir the government assumes about 130,000 people in need.

The aid of Malteser International in the different regions of the area affected by the earthquake was financed amongst others by the Federal Republic of Germany, the European Union, the Deutsche Bank, the Liebherr Foundation, the German company Gruenewald and the Kindermissionswerk 'Die Sternsinger'.

Further information:

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Vietnam: Emergency aid for victims of typhoon

Malteser International distributes foodstuffs, blankets and corrugated iron sheets to the victims of the typhoon Xangsane which hit Central Vietnam in the beginning of October. 'The storm turned at least 18,000 houses into rubble, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their homes', Cordula Wasser, Senior Desk Officer Vietnam, explains. 'The situation is dramatic: especially the farmers in the country are threatened by hunger, chill and illnesses.'

Malteser International provides 1,360 families in the provinces of Danang and Quang Nam with rice, oil, mosquito nets and blankets. They will also help the people in need to rebuild their roofs. The project expenditure of about 75,000 Euro is financed by the Foreign Office of Germany.



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On 1st October, the typhoon Xangsane devastated huge parts of the Philippines and of Vietnam. In Vietnam, at least 69 people died, tens of thousands became homeless. Since 1999, Malteser International already three times provided emergency aid in Vietnam after floods and storms.

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Since 1966, Malteser International is active in Vietnam. At present, the organisation together with the Vietnamese Women's Union realises a project combating poverty and improving health care. They train the staffs of health care institutions, organise nutrition seminars for women of the villages and foster the small trade and the agriculture.

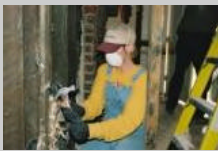
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3. America

New Orleans: Slide show illustrates reconstruction

Since hurricane Katrina devastatingly hit the United States in summer 2005, volunteers from the three US Associations of the Order of Malta have teamed up to help the people of New Orleans. Working in groups of ten to fifteen people, they manage to complete two to three houses a months.



Pete Scudner, one of these volunteers, composed seven slide shows out of the pictures he and some of his friends took while supporting the Order's home renovation programme in New Orleans. Impressively, the slide shows document the extent of destruction in New Orleans. Moreover, they give a clear picture of the activities and tasks of the helpers: nearly all the time dressed with their yellow t-shirts and masks, one can observe the dedicated volunteers carrying out the various steps of their work. Little by little - starting with the clearing out, including carpentry, plumbing and electrical work, and finishing off with the painting - destroyed buildings become comfortable homes again.

One of the beneficiaries is 99 year old Mr Wallace Vige. Without insurance, there was little hope for him and his son Wallace jr. to return to their house in New Orleans which was flooded as a result of the catastrophe. Thanks to the help of the volunteers, he is now looking forward to celebrate his 100th birthday back home.

To download the slide shows simply follow this link:

<http://photoshow.comcast.net/skudrna>

Further information:

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4. Europe

Romania: Eight wells for the flood victims

The Danube floods in spring 2006 left especially one region in Romania devastated: in the district of Tulcea some villages were submerged to 90 percent. This region is further disadvantaged by its outstanding poverty and the fact that the majority of the population is very old – the average age is 60 years.

Therefore, Malteser International started emergency and reconstruction aid in this area immediately after the flooding. Houses and whole villages have been rebuilt,

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partly in new places. Even though the situation of the people has improved since spring, there is still a major problem: water supply is not secured, as with the villages many of the wells were flooded and destroyed. Without drinking water, illnesses might spread quickly.

A recently started project responds to the problem: with the help of a company's donation of 50,000 EUR eight new wells will be built in the four villages Plaur, Patlaganica, Ceatalchioi and Salceni. Approximately 1,150 inhabitants living in the villages will benefit from this project. The construction of the wells started in October.

Further information:

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5. Staff

Staff particulars

Africa:



On 1 October, **Mrs Karolina Luczak Santana**, previously an intern of the Asia Desk in Cologne, started to work as Desk Officer Southern and Eastern Africa at the headquarters of Malteser International in **Cologne, Germany**.



Asia:

On 1 October **Mr Ulrich Brohl**, formerly an intern of the Asia Desk in Cologne, started to work as Project Assistant leaving for **Cambodia** in the end of October.



Mrs Katrin Rehfuss, former intern of the Communication Desk, left Germany on 22 October in order to work as Project Assistant Communication Asia in **Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan and India**.



Mr Ulrich Sammet, former Project Assistant WatSan (Water and Sanitation), since 1 October works as WatSan Manager in **Myanmar**.

Further information: Renate Esser, <mailto:renate.esser@malteser-international.org>

6. Others

Action against AIDS: Health does not come by itself!

On the occasion of its annual General Meeting on 27 and 28 October in Wuppertal/Germany, the Action against AIDS Alliance Germany (www.aids-kampagne.de) has launched its new campaign "Health does not come by itself!". The campaign which aims at collecting numerous signatures will be addressed to the governments of South Africa, Russia and Germany. The main demand is the consequent reinforcement of health services for people living with HIV and AIDS. "In South Africa and Russia, anonymous HIV tests, treatment and therapy are still a privilege for only few people. Also in Germany, health services for people living with HIV and AIDS are decreasing as financial support for counselling and treatment is cut. All three countries, however, would have the economic potential in order to considerably in-

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crease prevention, treatment and therapy”, one of the speakers of the Action against AIDS Alliance pointed out.

Malteser International is a member of the Action against AIDS Alliance Germany since the very beginning in 2001/2002. Today, about 100 church and civil organisations as well as more than 270 grassroots groups form the Alliance in Germany. Together they are advocating to improve the living conditions of people living with HIV and AIDS. Points of reference are the goals and objectives of the UN Declaration on HIV/AIDS. In order to exchange experiences and develop common references and strategies, Action against AIDS Germany cooperates with several international partners like the “Fund the Fund Network” (www.fundthefund.org) or the World AIDS Campaign (www.worldaidscampaign.org).

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