

On the SPOT

**NEWSLETTER
November 2006**

1. Africa

Kenya: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) continues support for health programme in Nairobi's shanty towns

Thanks to the financial support of the BMZ, the work of Malteser International in eight slums of Nairobi with a catchment area of 600,000 people can proceed for another three years until 31 December 2009.

Since August 2001, Malteser International has been fighting against HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in the slums of Mathare-North, Kariobangi, Riruta, Kibera, Kayole-Soweto, Remand Prisons, Dandora and Kangemi. The BMZ started supporting the work already in 2002. So far, Malteser International has been cooperating with the Nairobi City Council (NCC). In addition, the work in four of the slums will now also be supported by the Austrian government (ADA – Austrian Development Agency).

Up to now, the programme has been focusing on setting up laboratories which enable the on-site examination, diagnosis and treatment of patients. Moreover, the education of slum residents about the prevention of diseases and the treatment of HIV-affected persons with modern, life-prolonging AIDS medicine have always been essential parts of the programme.

In the future, Malteser International will work together with the Nairobi Health Medical Board (NHMB) which emerged from the amalgamation of the NCC and the Nairobi Provincial Health Department. The partners expect an improvement in medical management and logistics from the direct involvement of the Health Department. The NHMB takes over the responsibility for all health centres and the employees of the NCC and functions as direct contact on governmental side.

Apart from the local partner, the focus of the project will be different. As the number of institutions and organisations which are specialised in the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients has risen constantly due to the support of international programmes, Malteser International is now able to transfer patients who received antiretroviral therapy to specialised institutions. Therefore, the future focus of the project will lie on the sustainable treatment of TB patients, the diagnosis and prevention of HIV/AIDS and voluntary counselling and testing.

The new concepts will help to integrate the TB control, HIV diagnosis and preventive measures in existing governmental and social structures as far as possible.

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DR Congo: First progress in combating sexual violence

Malteser International perceives first progress in the fight against sexual violence in the Democratic Republic (DR) of Congo. ‘Since summer, a law clearly convicts rapes as criminal offences’, Dr. Alfred Kinzelbach, the coordinator of Malteser International in the area of the Great Lakes, explains: ‘Slowly, authorities and organisations break the taboo regarding rapes.’ For the first time, a protest march, theatre plays and radio segments have raised the issue on the ‘International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women’ on 25 November in Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu.

With different workshops on the subject, Malteser International triggers preoccupation with the problem. Since 2003, its partner organisations have been carrying out more than 1,000 measurements to sensitise the people to violence against women, reaching tens of thousands of people. ‘However, more than 30,000 raped women we had to treat during the past three years are more than 30,000 too many’, emphasises Kinzelbach. Also, it is estimated that less than ten percent of the incidents become public at all.

Malteser International is especially worried about gangs of former combatants. ‘In the jungle in the west of Lake Kivu, armed groups repeatedly kidnapped people during the past weeks, brutally raped the women and tortured the men – and sometimes killed them’, Kinzelbach describes the situation: ‘Urgently, the troop numbers of the United Nations and the Congolese army have to be strengthened in these areas.’



Since 2003, Malteser International has been treating girls and women who became victims of sexual violence in a specialised programme and offers them medical and psycho-social care. In 34 health care centres in the province of South Kivu and in the district of Ituri, the organisation has treated nearly 32,000 affected people aged between eleven and 70 years, among them also some men. Over 35 medical experts and more than 200 employees trained in psycho-social care coming from 20 partner organisations look after the victims and organise sensitisation workshops and awareness campaigns.

A photo gallery and texts on the topic are obtainable at Malteser International’s website www.malteser-international.org.

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Sudan: Reducing suffering in the face of a growing conflict

Since 2004, Malteser International has been providing basic health care services as mother and child care in North Darfur. Recently, Marie Theres Benner, Senior Health Coordinator of Malteser International visited the project site to review and evaluate the two years’ implementation phase and support the further planning process.

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In the province of North Darfur, Malteser International supports five health centres and basic health care units and takes care for about 120,000 people living in this region. Monthly, the 62 community health workers – nurses, birth assistants, lab assistants - two doctors and one professional midwife treat approximately 8,800 patients, vaccinate 300 children and examine 720 pregnant women at an average. Since 2005, 10,200 pregnant women came for regular preventive medical checkups, nearly 30,000 children received immunisation against the main infectious diseases, 115,000 patients received medical treatment, and our teams counted 684 deliveries and distributed more than 10,000 mosquito nets. Within the next months, all these services will have to be consolidated and monitoring will have to be upgraded by an appropriate health information system.

According to OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), besides two million Darfurians, at present there are about two million internally displaced persons living in the province of Darfur. These numbers highlight the urgent necessity of the implemented health programmes. In addition to Malteser International, 92 other Non-Governmental Organisations, Red Cross and UN organisations with altogether 13,400 humanitarian helpers are working in Darfur trying to reduce the people's suffering.

Further information: Nicole Moran, <mailto:nicole.moran@malteser-international.org>

2. Asia

Annual Meeting Asia: Tsunami lessons learnt

From 23 till 28 October 2006, the Annual Meeting Asia (AMA) took place on Phuket, Thailand, focussing mainly on "Tsunami lessons learnt".

The 31 participants represented Malteser International's projects in Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Vietnam, Thailand, India and Indonesia. Ingo Radtke, Malteser International's Secretary General, and further staff members of the headquarters in Cologne joined the meeting. The participants were glad to welcome Mrs Assunta Link, Honorary Consul of the Order of Malta for Thailand and Cambodia, who has been supporting Malteser International's projects in Thailand for several years.



Besides an evaluation of the Tsunami projects, a special focus was put on housing and water/sanitation. Furthermore, the participants used the possibility of discussing general issues concerning Malteser International and Public Relations/Fundraising.

The AMA group did a one-day excursion visiting the projects in southern Thailand. The comprehensive Tsunami programme includes housing, water/sanitation, income generating activities and psycho-social care.

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Indonesia: Sewing project gives hope for the future

‘Harapan Kita’ means ‘Our Hope’. At first glance, the little tailoring business hiding behind that name does not deserve the promising name. A group of thirteen women started to sew in June, with nothing but a house, a tailoring teacher, sewing machines and textiles provided by Malteser International and “Aktion Deutschland Hilft” (ADH).



However, for the people of the village Jambo Timu, projects which generate work and, thus, allow the people to have an own income, are of high importance. Earning a living with their own hands does not only mean fighting poverty. In the village disastrously hit by the tsunami, it also means fighting the memories of the tragedy. Having a task means having a perspective, having a future, going ahead instead of looking backwards. Often, it does not even need a lot of money to realise the people’s ideas. Nevertheless, without getting such support in first place, the villagers cannot start helping themselves.

After nearly five months, ‘Harapan Kita’ has proven to be successful: by now, the women have learned to sew and create veils, suits, covers, tablecloths and curtains. They were able to find suitable markets for their products. Their customers are villagers and traders. According to the “Progress Report” of October 2006, motivation is very high: the women are very interested to improve their skills. Older group members teach the younger ones. Thus, “Harapan Kita” has also become a place for communication.

The sewing project is part of a comprehensive rehabilitation programme for the village as a whole: houses are built, health care is provided, infrastructure is under construction and businesses are set up to develop the village as a social unit.

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Thailand: New centre for psycho-social care for adolescents

On 20 October 2006, the Malteser mental health centre for psycho-social care of adolescents was officially opened in Khao Lak. The new place offers a drop-in centre for young people suffering from the tsunami disaster as well as other mental health problems.



A psychotherapist, a counsellor, a social worker and a mental health officer are now going to face the manifold problems the young people suffer from. The team provides primary level therapeutic services for ten selected schools and communities. The adolescents are treated by means of individual counselling, group activities and family counselling. Furthermore, a hotline service day and night lends an ear to those in pressing need. In a stress management room young people can learn how to cope with stress situations. Finally, a book corner offers a space to calm down, relax and enjoy the world of books. The official inauguration of the new health centre was joined by representatives of the District Government offices of Takua Pa, members

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of other organisations working in the area as well as representatives of the schools and communities that are being targeted by the project.

The new mental health centre is part of the Mental Health Programme for adolescents implemented by Malteser International in cooperation with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) in the Tsunami-affected area of Khao Lak. The goal of the project is to promote life and relationship skills, solve mental health problems and improve the Emotional Quotient (EQ) of youths.

Further information:

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Vietnam: Reunion of former Vietnam volunteers in Ehreshoven

40 years after their first mission in Vietnam, former Malteser staff members came together in the convention centre “Malteser Kommende” in Ehreshoven near Cologne on 10 and 11 November 2006.

One of the highlights of the event was the speech given by the famous journalist, author and publicist Prof. Dr. Peter Scholl-Latour who gave a historical review of the Vietnam operation with references to the actual events of the day. He himself worked as a correspondent in Vietnam and was captured by the Vietcong in 1973. For his outstanding commitment for a better communication and understanding between countries and cultures, Mr Scholl-Latour was awarded with the jubilee medal which was handed over by Johannes Freiherr Heereman, Executive President of Malteser Germany.

Besides the joy over their reunion, the former Vietnam volunteers celebrated a service in honour of the deceased. Moreover, a historical exhibition with pictures taken by the journalist Jochen Voigt who then documented the action of Malteser Germany in Vietnam was opened for visit.

On behalf of the German Government, volunteers of Malteser Germany were active in Vietnam from 1966 till 1975. A team of 303 helpers, among them doctors, nurses and medical assistants, provided humanitarian aid for the wounded southern Vietnamese and the civil population. One member lost his life during a bombing. Five other members were kidnapped by a Vietcong unit. Three of them died, two were finally released.

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3. Europe

Hungary: Secretary Generals of Central and Eastern European (CEE) Malteser relief services meet for their Annual Conference

In mid-November, 22 secretary generals and further representatives of the Malteser relief services in ten Central and Eastern European countries came together in Bu-

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dapest for their Annual Conference. The conference was hosted by Malteser Hungary “Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat” whose president Monsignore Imre Kozma welcomed the participants and encouraged them to continue their valuable social work and spread the Christian message in their societies.



One of the highlights of the conference was the adoption of a new concept that is supposed to function as a basis for the CEE network. This “Vision/Mission” statement expresses the collective objective and common mandate of the work done by the CEE Malteser relief services. Moreover, the participants started to compose a declaration for voluntary work and to prepare a presentation for a conference of the Order of Malta which will take place in Vienna by the end of 2007. Finally, the action plan for 2007 was adopted. Among other things, it contains training elements for employees on aid programmes of the European Union and corresponding application steps. On the basis of the decisions taken in Budapest, the CEE Malteser network idea gains clearer outlines.

Further information:

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4. Staff

Staff particulars

Africa:



Mrs Maria Bongard, formerly an intern of the Africa Desk, on 1 November went to **Yei and Juba, Sudan**, as a Project Assistant.



On 15 November, **Mrs Vera Minnik** left for **Menongue, Angola**, to work as a Project Manager. She formerly worked for Malteser International as a nurse in Afghanistan.



After having worked already as an intern at the headquarters in Cologne, as Project Assistant in Afghanistan and as Advisor for our local partners in India, **Mrs Nicole Moran** has now started work as Senior Desk Officer Southern and Eastern Africa at the headquarters in **Cologne, Germany** on 1 November.



Mr Sascha Sindermann became Project Assistant in **Nairobi, Kenya**, on 1 November and will move on to **Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo**, on 1 February 2007.

Asia:



Mr Dr. Branko Dubajic from Serbia started to work as Programme Coordinator Health in **North-West Frontier Province and Azad Kashmir, Pakistan**, on 6 November.



On 1 November, **Mrs Sandra Harlaß**, who formerly worked as a nurse and Public Health Adviser in Myanmar, started as a Project Manager in **Samrong, Cambodia**.

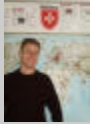
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Mr Michael Hinsch started his preparation for working as an adviser for local partners in **India** on 13 November. He is going to leave for India on 1 December.

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5. Others

World AIDS Day on 1 December: Increase of experts for the fight against AIDS urgently required

On the occasion of World AIDS Day on 1 December, Malteser International demands a strong rise in the vocational training and employment of qualified personnel for the fight against the immune deficiency disease AIDS. “Millions of specialised staff – medical staff, community health workers, staff for psycho-social treatment, social workers, and lab technicians - are missing. The modern medical drugs are very effective but may cause many adverse effects that go from nausea and diarrhoea to damages of the liver. Therefore, intensive care of the patients and the regular control of their blood and organs are indispensable”, explains Dr. Peter Schmitz, Chief Medical Officer of Malteser International: “At the moment, only 20 percent of six million AIDS patients worldwide are treated with the so called antiretroviral therapy. In 2010, an expected number of nine million will need this kind of therapy – consequently, the demand for experts will rise dramatically.” According to the World Health Organisation, four million vacancies must be filled. This investment into staff and training will cost more than seven billion US dollar.



In the slums of Nairobi, for example, Malteser International experiences how important qualified and sufficient specialised personnel is: “When we started the project three years ago, the supply with medication was adequate but qualified employees were missing”, Schmitz declares: “The employment and further training of local specialised staff is the key to the success of our work.” Since 2001, Malteser International has been fighting against AIDS and tuberculosis in eight slums of Nairobi with a catchment area of 600,000 people. The diagnosis and treatment, the training of local staff in the health centres as well as the education of the slum residents are essential parts of the programme. Only in 2006, they have yet provided counselling for 23,100 persons until October and tested their blood on HIV/AIDS; already twice as many consultations and tests than in 2005. Obviously, the concept of Malteser International works: The infection rate with the HI-virus clearly declined.

About ten percent of the adult population in the slums of Kenya’s capital are infected by the HI virus – thus, the shanty towns belong to the areas that are the most affected by the disease in Kenya. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development recently granted 480,000 Euro for the continuation of the project until the end of 2009.

At present, Malteser International runs extensive health care programmes in order to fight HIV/AIDS in eight countries of Asia and Africa. Next year, a new programme that also covers the education of the slum residents up to the permanent treatment of

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AIDS-patients with the antiretroviral therapy will be started in India, which meanwhile counts the highest number of people infected with HIV worldwide. The organisation is also involved in the fight against the pandemic as a member of the “Action against AIDS Germany” network.

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8th Humanitarian Congress: Theory and Practice of Humanitarian Action

On 27 and 28 October 2006, scientists and experts in the field of humanitarian action came together for the 8th Humanitarian Congress that took place in Berlin under the motto: “Stretching the Mandate: Humanitarian Action and Solutions to Crises?”

After an introduction seminar for beginners in humanitarian issues, representatives of different NGOs exchanged their views on the question of how humanitarian organizations and victims deal with insecurity during crises and in how far humanitarian action should seek to protect people in addition to providing life saving assistance. Apart from testimonials on the medical challenges in low security environments, the experts discussed challenges of modern international law, namely in how far the calling for military intervention in non-international conflicts is compatible with the principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality. Another point of interest was in how far humanitarian organizations are able to address future vulnerabilities in conflict settings. Marie-Therese Benner, Senior Health Coordinator, Malteser International, presented her view concerning the question: Is Simply Providing Assistance Enough, when People are being Exposed to Violence and Abuses? The experts talking on this topic explained in how far humanitarian action provides protection where the system of law has collapsed, during war or where state interests override the interests of victims.

On Friday night, the different organizations joining the congress had the opportunity to present their work to the public on the Humanitarian Forum.

The meeting was organized by Médecins du Monde, the Institute of Tropical Medicine Berlin, the General Medical Council Berlin, Médecins Sans Frontières and the German Red Cross.

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