

## **Angola: Trainings for midwives to improve mother-child-care**

In the beginning of February, Malteser International organised two trainings for local midwives of eight health centres in the province of Kuando Kubango. 27 midwives attended the one-week long courses that took place at two different locations. The training included theoretical and practical exercises as well as on the job training. A test in the beginning of the course had shown the importance of such further education: In average, only 30 per cent of the questions regarding pregnancy and birth were answered correctly by the birth attendants. In the final examination, however, up to 70 per cent of the answers were correct. Even the Angolan television was present, when the midwives received their certificates. The interview with the project coordinator was broadcasted countrywide.

These trainings were part of the basic health care programme which Malteser International is realising in Kuando Kubango since mid 2006. It includes amongst others the distribution of medical drugs, the treatment of patients, rational drug use trainings for the medical staff, rehabilitation and supervision in eight health centres. The province of Kuando Kubango is traditionally one of the most remote and neglected provinces of Angola.



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## **Sudan: Support of UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) Fistula Campaign in Darfur**

From 15 February to 1 March, Malteser International supported a UNFPA Fistula Campaign in Darfur. The staff in the rural health centres contributed to the campaign by sensitizing and identifying patients and arranging transport to the referral clinic for those in need of surgery. Moreover, the organization managed to print over 200 pamphlets with simplified educational messages developed by the UNFPA. Midwives and other health workers of Malteser International distributed the material. The goal of the campaign is to improve the lives of the affected women.

Obstetric fistula is a hole in the birth canal caused by prolonged labour without prompt medical intervention that leaves women incontinent and often isolated and ashamed. Left untreated, fistula can lead to chronic medical problems. Obstetric fistula occurs dis-



proportionately among impoverished girls and women, especially those living far from medical services. A simple surgery can normally repair the injury, with success rates as high as 90 per cent.

Already in 2003, UNFPA spearheaded the global 'Campaign to End Fistula', a collaborative initiative to prevent fistula and restore the health and dignity of those living with its consequences. After the surgeries the

women receive further support by UNFPA. Income generating activities are one example of how UNFPA assists them to sustain themselves back in their communities.

Further information:

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### **Afghanistan: High-rank visit to the winter relief project**

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Despite serious concerns regarding the safety of his person, the German Ambassador Hans-Ulrich Seidt came to see the winter relief project of Malteser International in Puli Alam/Logar Province. The prevailing cold weather had confronted the population with numerous problems, for example blocked roads due to the heavy snow fall. 1,000 families in extreme need were chosen to be supported on the basis of the results of a survey. Each family received 120 kilos of firewood, four blankets, four mattresses and a heater. Altogether, material worth 200,000 Euros was distributed.



Ambassador Seidt showed himself impressed by the commitment of Malteser International in that area as, at the moment, they are the only German relief organisation on the spot, in this province situated in the south of Kabul.

The project had a running time of three months, and was finalized by the end of February. It was realised in cooperation with local partner organisations and with the financial support of the Foreign Office of Germany.

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## India I: Opening of first HIV/AIDS prevention project

In order to mobilise the community towards facilitating HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, Malteser International started a comprehensive project in 33 tsunami affected villages in the Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu.



Available reports and projections on HIV/AIDS predict an alarming situation in the region of Tamil Nadu, which ranks the second in the prevalence of the disease in India. Thus, Malteser International decided to intervene and contribute to the fight against HIV/AIDS in cooperation with its local partner organisation “Centre for Social Reconstruction” (CSR). The target group was chosen with regard to the experience of CSR

in working with the interior and coastal community. The organisation had observed that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is more frequent in the coastal areas and, thus, 33 coastal villages with a catchment area of 150,000 were chosen for the project.

The purpose of the project is to enhance the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families and to prevent and control further transmission of the disease. People learn how to live with the disease and affected family members receive trainings on extending home based care and support. Apart from the identification of HIV/AIDS patients, regular counselling, the formation of support groups and education campaigns for the community are part of the project. The level of awareness will be increased through different types of media including individual, group and public meetings, cultural programmes, a variety of Information Education and Communication (IEC) material and exhibitions. Community based organisations, leaders and elders learn how to ensure the sustainability of the programme. Just recently, Michael Hinsch, Project Coordinator and Advisor in Nagercoil, took part in an awareness building session and reported that the cooperation between the elders and community leaders works really well. The participants discussed the problem of stigmatisation very openly. Another major goal is to establish a functional system of referral of patients to state hospitals and linkages with government and non-governmental organisations.

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## India II: Herbal health care and livelihood promotion in tsunami affected villages

Also in Kanyakumari district, Malteser International started an inventive project that combines the education on the use of traditional herbal medicine with income generating measures. The overall purpose of the project is to improve the health situation and quality of life of the poorest people in the tsunami affected area.

Kanyakumari district is considered to be a treasure house for medical plants. The rich

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biodiversity of medical plants have formed the basis for the development of the system of Aryveda in the region which attracts people worldwide. Herbal medicines have proven their usefulness in the health system over centuries. Being locally available and in tune with the traditional health system the use of herbal plants and medicines can contribute to an accessible and affordable treatment for a number of common diseases especially for the poorest people who otherwise often find it difficult to access medical treatment.



In order to improve the accessibility and acceptance of herbal medicines and sustain the socio-economic status of the rural poor, Malteser International together with its local partner organisation “Health for One Million” (HOM) now implements a project to propagate herbal medicine with the active participation of the community. With the help of a model herbal farm as well as model vermicompost farms, HOM volunteers offer vermicompost trainings, awareness sessions on herbal medicine and special trainings on how to prepare herbal home remedies and how to grow herbal plants. Rural households are supported to start their own herbal gardens and vermicompost units, thereby improving their income and livelihood.

Further information:

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### **Thailand: New sanitary facilities for primary school and kindergarten**



In order to improve the hygiene and thereby the health of the 102 children of the Tha Pak Weang School in the province of Phangnga in the south of Thailand, Malteser International supported the financing of eight latrines. As planned, the latrines could be finished in January. The costs for the project were shared with the German Speaking Protestant Congregation. Malteser International covered the costs for the construction material.

Beforehand, only four dilapidated latrines had been in use for all students and teachers. This had not been enough to assure the cleanliness and hygiene. The children that either visit the kindergarten or the primary school of Tha Pak Weang School now additionally take part in trainings to hear about the importance of hygiene. They learn to wash their hands after having used the latrines and how to maintain the toilets properly. Thus, the spreading of illnesses shall be further lessened.

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## USA/New Orleans: Archbishop of New Orleans visits volunteers

The Archbishop of New Orleans, Alfred C. Hughes, came to see the construction sites and the participants in the Home Renovation Program. He emphasized the continuing need to help the poor of the city and expressed his thanks towards the Order of Malta and Malteser International for their efforts to do so.



Since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in August 2005, Malteser International and the Order of Malta, in cooperation with the organisation “Rebuilding Together”, organised several working sessions in the poor neighbourhoods of New Orleans to renovate houses of people in need. Volunteers from all over the USA joined to overcome the devastations of the hurricane.

One of the recent beneficiaries is Leola Brown, a retired widow, who herself had worked on a honorary basis for the community of Tremé in New Orleans for many years. Now she is glad to receive help in return. “Now that I have a home again, the volunteers are welcome to stay at any time. They are a blessing to me”, Brown says. The last trimester of project activities has started in January; a final working session will take place in April.

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### Africa:

**Mr Peter McCanny** from Ireland started to work as Program Coordinator in **Yei, South Sudan** on 1 February.

On 1 February, **Ms Sharon Lipsea**, who previously worked in South Sudan, moved on to **El Fasher, Darfur** to work as Reproductive Health Manager.

**Mr Sascha Sindermann**, formerly Project Assistant in **Nairobi, Kenya**, moved on to **Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo**, on 1 February 2007 to work there as Project Assistant.

### Asia:

On 15 January, **Dr. Osman Eltayeb** from Denmark left for **Myanmar** to work as Project Coordinator for the TB/HIV program in Maungdaw, NRS and Yangon.

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**Ms Julia Brunner**, formerly an intern of the Asia Desk, started to work as a Project Assistant in **Yangon, Myanmar** on 1 February.

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## Pro bono pro Bene: 80 good deeds for the Holy Father

### The idea:

On 16 April 2007, Pope Benedict XVI will celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. People worldwide will celebrate this special day with the Holy Father. We as members of the worldwide 'Malteser community' would like to make him a special present: 80 good deeds, 80 voluntary activities which fulfil the mission of the Order 'Defence of the Faith and assistance to the poor and the suffering' in a good tradition. 80 pages on which all these good deeds will be documented on will be bound to a special book and, if possible, handed over to the Holy Father as a birthday present. Every single Malteser staff member is asked to contribute to the project.

### What kinds of activities are appropriate?

Basically, everything Malteser staff or Malteser volunteers do for their neighbours is appropriate. If once or on a regular basis, it shall only be voluntary and related to the mission of the Order.



Picture: H. Schmitz Dremmen/wdr

### The book:

Each page will present one deed. You can individually design the page that documents your contribution to the project. You can write on the front as well as the back page. The description of your good deed should include the following information:

- title and name of action
- date and place
- name and address of the Malteser group or Malteser project
- number of people involved and, if possible, number of hours spent voluntary for the activity
- description: How could you help whom?

All contributions to the project should be sent to the Headquarters in Cologne until 9 March 2007. Please make sure to name a person responsible and the corresponding contact information.

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