

On the SPOT

**NEWSLETTER
March 2007**

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DR Congo: Food distribution for 22,360 internally displaced people

In the last week of March, Malteser International in collaboration with the UN World Food Programme (WFP) started a comprehensive food distribution. 368 tons of food – cereals, vegetables, oils and salt – were distributed to 4,472 internally displaced families from the community of Nindja in Bukavu, South-Kivu. The food items as well as the transport capacities – 40 lorries – had been provided by WFP. The safety during the distributions was ensured by local administration and military authorities.



The population of Nindja is the one most affected by the misuse of power committed by armed forces in the region. Due to the bad security situation, the 4,472 families had to leave their villages and are currently living with family members or friends in the more secure villages of Luhago, Kishadu, Chulwe and Ihembe.

With this huge humanitarian relief project, Malteser International and the UN prevented the need of building up refugee camps for the internally displaced people (IDP). In order to stabilize the food supply for the IDPs as well as for the host families, further food distributions are planned for the next two months.

Further information: Eveline Stoffel, <mailto:eveline.stoffel@malteser-international.org>

Kenya: World Tuberculosis (TB) Day 2007: “TB anywhere is TB everywhere”

On 24 March, the World TB Day was commemorated worldwide under the theme “TB anywhere is TB everywhere”. On the eve of the day, a press conference on the topic was held in Nairobi where the Director of Medical Services of the Ministry of Health, Dr James Nwakem, highlighted the most important facts about TB in Kenya: In 2006, 117,000 cases were registered. The case detection rate of TB currently amounts 50 per cent. 70 people die of TB every day. 60 percent of the TB cases are also HIV positive.

For the World TB Day celebration in Nairobi, Malteser International in collaboration with the National TB programme, organized a huge street parade comprising the public, community health workers and health workers from the health centre in Mukuru Kwa Ruben, a village in Embakasi district where Malteser International operates TB and HIV services. At Kwa Ruben Primary School, about 300 people listened to speeches about TB

and HIV/AIDS prevention hold by Paul Ochieng, Medical Coordinator of Malteser International, Dr Ogaro, the provincial TB Coordinator, representatives of the local administration and other stakeholders. In a free medical camp more than 80 people were tested for TB out of which 20 were positive and immediately referred for treatment to the health centre supported by Malteser International in Soweto Kayole. Community health workers associated with the Malteser International Nairobi slums programme staged an inspiring play that showed the process of how the organisation helps to diagnose TB and directly initiates treatment. For all the celebrities, the organisation donated visibility items such as t-shirts as well as health information and education material.



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Sudan I: Malteser International expands TB control activities



This year's World TB Day was also a landmark event for the residents of Maridi County, Western Equatoria of South Sudan. Malteser International in cooperation with the local health authorities organised a festival to celebrate the extension of the South Sudan TB control programme to Maridi County.

School children, churches and local groups participated and presented songs, dances and poems on TB control with the key message:

“Goho! Aktar mini talata usubu, bekin de TB – Coughing more than three weeks could be TB!” Banners and posters with the same message were also spread on that occasion. The celebrations were attended by high-ranking local authorities from the County.

According to the County Medical Officer, Marko Wai Wai, TB is a disease of great public health concern in the area. Thus, launching the TB programme in the County was right in time as people from the area had to travel far distances seeking for TB treatment. He acknowledged the commitment of Malteser International to reduce the disease burden due to TB.

To support future awareness activities, Malteser International introduced a “STOP TB”-trophy for the County Health Department, which will be awarded annually to local entities actively contributing to the combat against TB, while participating and organising public cultural or sports events. These events will help to spread the message of TB con-

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trol and highlight the necessity for a continuous engagement involving the population in need.

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

Sudan II: Polio immunisation campaign in Darfur

From 24 to 28 February, the 2nd round of the 15th Polio National Immunisation Days (PNID) could finally be completed in areas of north Darfur controlled by the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA). The campaign was originally planned to be conducted in December 2006. Due to the instable security situation at that time, the implementation had to be postponed in some parts of north Darfur, among them Galab, Tabit and Shangil Tobayi.

In order to prepare the implementation of the PNID, Malteser International had announced the dates for the campaign through health facilities in Galab, Tabit and Shangil Tobayi as well as through Sheikhs and advertising on the market days.



For this polio campaign, the organisation furthermore had agreed to take responsibility for the vaccination in the two camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Shangil Tobayi (Shangil Tobayi and Shadat camp) since another relief organisation operating health facilities in the camps had cut back its activities for the time being.

Malteser International conducts PNID on a regular basis and, thus, the required personnel for the implementation could easily be mobilised. Most of the vaccinators had already participated in previous PNID and proved to have a lot of experience. They also had the advantage of knowing the people and the areas well.

During the second round of the 15th PNID in the areas of Galab, Tabit and Shangil Tobayi, a total of 8,605 children under five received polio vaccination. In fact, more children than estimated could be reached.

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Afghanistan: Community development through self-help approaches



At the beginning of March, Malteser International started a new project in Logar, a province located south of Kabul, which aims at improving rural infrastructure and reducing poverty by income generating measures. The proposals for the small scale projects are forwarded by the local communities, requesting for example the construction of irrigation systems, village streets and flood protection walls. All projects include a significant work contribution of the local population.

Additionally, rural women groups get lessons in food conservation and agricultural production to increase the family income in a sustainable way. In order to help them to work more independently, local relief organisations are offered capacity trainings for project implementation.

The project has duration of eight months and is financially supported by the German Foreign Ministry with the amount of 350,000 EUR and by Malteser International.

Further information:

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India: Enhancing the livelihood of Dalit women in Tamil Nadu

Malteser International now also includes Dalit communities (“untouchables”) into an already existing project which aims at improving the livelihood of poor women in Tamil Nadu. In four coastal villages in the districts of Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi, the organisation is going to support its local partner relief agency Vaan Muhil to enhance the income situation of Dalits, the most marginalised group within the traditional Indian caste system. Small loans offer them an opportunity to make a living by rearing goats, selling fish on the market, or starting a small petty shop.



Already in June 2006, Malteser International and Vaan Muhil had started supporting a total number of 276 women from fisher communities in setting up small businesses. So far, the special focus of the project has been on widows, single and elderly women as well as further vulnerable groups. “These small loans mean an economic and social empowerment for the women giving them full check on their money”, Michael Hinsch, Project Adviser for Malteser International in India, explains. They also help to improve the living conditions of the coastal communities which have been dependent on

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fishing but now face the problem of decreasing catches caused by the tsunami of 2004. The loans are offered to villagers whose requests are not accepted by any bank and who in many cases have become victims of private money lenders who demand monthly and sometimes even daily interest rates from ten up to more than 100 percent.

The women participating in the project were encouraged to form self-help groups in order to exchange their experiences in managing their small-scale businesses. The members pay back to the group the loan they have received thus creating a revolving fund which helps to support other women who are also in need of a loan. Additionally, Vaan Muhil offered trainings to the groups covering topics such as accounting and developing business plans. “The fact that almost all women pay back their instalments within a reasonable time-frame shows the success of this concept“, Hinsch says.

Other components of the partner project include eco-clubs for youths to create awareness for ecological problems, health promotion in order to link the villagers to existing health facilities, and legal services to encourage people to speak out when their basic rights are violated.

Further information:

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Indonesia: Livelihood exhibition in Lapangan Hiraq, Lhokseumawe

From 23 to 25 February, an exhibition focussing on the material produced by tsunami victims in small loan programmes took place in Lapangan Hiraq, Lhokseumawe. The exhibition gave tsunami victims a platform to show their products to the public and get in touch with potential investors and traders. The visitors got an impression of what is actually done by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the tsunami affected area of Aceh.



Participants of the children singing contest

The exhibition was opened with an official ceremony including speeches by Sandra Froebe, the Malteser International community programme coordinator, and T. Maksal Saputra, the head of the Agency of the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction for the Region and Community of Aceh and Nias (BRR) regional office II Lhokseumawe. The military commander of Lhokseumawe, Letkol Inf Yogi Gunawan, and the assistant of the head of police of Lhokseumawe, Kompol Ismec

Chairuddin, also participated. The opening ceremony was also attended by national press and television as well as representatives from national and international NGOs.

Thanks to the financial contribution of Malteser International, eleven livelihood groups had the possibility to participate. Further eleven groups were sponsored by another eight NGOs. The main stand sponsored by Malteser International accommodated the sewing business “Harapan Kita” from Jambo Timu, the veils business “Putri Jilbab” from Blang

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Rimueng and a Pandan carpet group from Jambo Mesjid. For the members of “Harapan Kita” the exhibition was a big source of motivation. Now, they are even more eager than before to market their products also beyond the area of Jambo Timu. Having seen the high quality of the products, other villagers now also want to join “Harapan Kita”.

Apart from the presentation of products, the exhibition offered an entertainment programme including traditional Acehnese dances, an a-cappella group, a talk show broadcast on the radio, German games for children (e.g. sack hopping, egg walking, etc.) and a Dabus knife dance. The exhibition closed with a singing contest for children. 30 boys and girls up to the age of twelve participated. A jury of four people gave points and the three best singers received prizes.

By the end of the exhibition, many participants went home with valuable experience and knowledge. There were also some requests to extend the exhibition from three days to one whole week. After the exhibition both local government and BRR voiced their interest to organise this exhibition on a regular basis and in other places.

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Myanmar: New TB project reaches more than one million people

A new project in Myanmar focuses on the treatment and containment of TB in the provinces of Rakhine State and Yangon Division. It aims at countervailing the spread of the infectious disease by medication, distribution of foodstuffs as well as direct and regular supervision of the patients by health workers. “In Myanmar, tuberculosis is one of the main causes of death. This is due to the bad health care situation as well as the great poverty of the population and the lack of knowledge about the disease,” Stephan Huppertz, Senior Desk Officer Myanmar, explains.



The health workers who care for the patients play a central role in the fight against tuberculosis: They educate the people and prevent them from discontinuing the intake of the medication too early. “The medication has to be taken until the bacteria are completely killed. This takes about six to eight months. Patients who end the intake too early because they feel better develop a resistance toward the medication – and then they are hardly to be cured anymore,” Huppertz says.

The project accompanies an already existing TB programme run in Myanmar already since 2003. Many people could already be reached and cured, but the fight against the disease continues and still has to be reinforced.

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Sri Lanka: World Water Day 2007: “Coping with water scarcity”

“Today, we use rain water for bathing, washing, cleaning, cooking and even drinking. My mother and I do not have to walk for hours to the next well and carry home the heavy buckets anymore,” tells twelve-year-old Titra, who lives in the Galle District in the south of Sri Lanka together with her parents and her four-year-old brother. Her family is one of more than 3,000 tsunami affected families in the districts of Galle, Matara, Hambantota and Ampara who get their own water tank from Malteser International for collecting rain water.



“This form of water supply offers new perspectives and possibilities in coping with water scarcity,” Dr Juergen Clemens, Senior Desk Officer Sri Lanka, explains: “The access to clean water is a basic need and basic right of every single person. By means of collecting and filtering rain water from their own roof, we can sustainably improve the quality of life of the families, especially of women and young girls who play a key role in ensuring the water supply of their families. The system provides up to 20 litres clean water per person per day.” On the one hand, the rain water harvesting system serves as a supplement for the water supply that had been destroyed by the tsunami at many places. On the other hand, these tanks collect 5,000 up to

8,000 litres and, thus, help to bridge the seasonal water supply shortages the population in the south of Sri Lanka has to face each year after the monsoon.

The staff of Malteser International also trains the families in the proper use of the rain water harvesting system, especially how to clean it, and informs the population on general questions concerning health and hygiene. They distribute so called H₂S test kits that enable the families to test their rain water on bacterial contamination. “Many people suffer from needless infections because of the inappropriate and unsanitary handling of water. Our aim is the sustainable improvement of hygiene and, thus, a decrease of the risks of infection. So far, the test kits are distributed for free especially among students who serve as multipliers”, Clemens explains: “At the beginning, the families were sceptical of drinking the rain water and preferred the water from contaminated wells. With the help of the test kits they are now able to see for themselves that the rain water has a better quality than the water from the wells.”

More than 40 percent of the world population already suffer from water scarcity. In Sri Lanka, only 30 percent of the population have access to improved piped water supply. The water supply and hygiene projects of Malteser International in the south of Sri Lanka are supported by UNICEF and implemented in cooperation with the local partner organisation “Lanka Rain Water Harvesting Forum”.

Please find an interview with Kelvin Singles, Project Coordinator Health and Hygiene in

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Galle, Sri Lanka [here](#).

Further information:

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Vietnam: International Women's Day on 8 March 2007: 'My dream is fulfilled'

„Two steps forward, non back“ – This is indeed the motto of the participants of the seminars on business start-ups offered by Malteser International for women in Vietnam: In the low-income province of Quang-Nam and in the impoverished districts of the city of Danang, the organisation teaches women of needy families entrepreneurial and trading skills. In role plays and exercises, they develop products and operating plans in order to work more successfully in the future and, thus, to secure the income of their families.

„Three years ago, I was desperate“, says Thuy Diem, one of the participants of the programme, who has gone into business for herself as a tailor. „Today, I have seven employees and my own fashion label.“ Many of the women are sole earners; their former monthly income often was below eight Euros. „My dream is fulfilled: Today, I have a safe income and my family has escaped from poverty“, Thuy Diem says. Like her, already 1,150 women took part in such seminars since they started in the year 2000. 67 percent of the participants, among them sewers, saleswomen, farmers and basket makers, after the training could raise their income and thus improve the living situation of their children and families on a sustained basis. Some of them even qualified to work as trainers for the seminars.



„The self-esteem of the women increases as they manage to save themselves from poverty by using their own knowledge and skills. They get the courage to take their life into their own hands“, Cordula Wasser, Senior Desk Officer Vietnam, explains. The seminars are part of a comprehensive programme reaching more than 2,000 families. It enables the women to improve their own and their children's health, food and income situation. Besides the seminars on business start-ups, Malteser International also informs mothers and pregnant women about nutrition, health care and hygiene, distributes seeds and animals as well as complementary food for undernourished children and trains local health workers.

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Africa:

On 7 March, **Mr Désiré Rakotoarison** from Madagascar went to **Ariwara, DR Congo**, again to work as Programme Health Coordinator. He worked there before as Medical Coordinator.

Asia:

Mr Ulrich Wehmeyer started to work as Project Co-Manager in **Colombo, Sri Lanka**, on 1 March.

Also on 1 March, **Mrs Alisa Grabus from Bosnia and Herzegovina** started as Programme Administrator in **Islamabad, Pakistan**.

Mrs Caren Liebscher started to work as Biostatics Manager in **Suamtra, Indonesia**, on 15 March.

On 15 March, **Mrs Anne Kroening** went to **Maungdaw, Myanmar**, to work as Project Coordinator.

Also on 15 March, **Mrs Milcah Munoko** from Kenya started to work as Human Resources Officer in **Colombo, Sri Lanka**.

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

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**Ministerial Conference “Partnership and Responsibility”:
Malteser International demands increase of funds and experts for the
fight against AIDS**

Dr. Peter Schmitz, Chief Medical Officer, represented the demands of Malteser International in the fight against HIV/AIDS on the occasion of the Ministerial Conference “Partnership and Responsibility – Together Against HIV/AIDS” which took place in Bremen from 12 to 13 March: “The political authorities finally have to take on responsibility and provide adequate funds for the fight against AIDS.” Representatives of 25 countries of the EU and the eastern neighbouring countries had met for the conference to discuss the role of the political leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS.



Today, about 39.5 million people live with the HI virus. To combat the immune defi-

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ciency disease, a strong rise in the vocational training and employment of specialised staff is urgently necessary. Furthermore, the adequate supply with AIDS medication is essential for a successful treatment. „Right now, only 25 percent of 6.8 million AIDS patients worldwide receive the necessary medication. In 2010, we expect a number of nine million patients”, Schmitz explains. In order to fulfil the promise made in Gleneagles in 2005, namely to ensure the access to AIDS medication for every patient, there is still a lot to do on the side of the political authorities. The German chancellor Angela Merkel is willing to put HIV/AIDS on top of the agenda and has promised to increase the German contribution in the fight against HIV/AIDS from currently 300 to 400 million Euros.

“AIDS is not only a medical problem or a problem in terms of health policy but rather a problem concerning the whole society”, Schmitz points out. 16 million children worldwide have become orphans or half-orphans due to AIDS. Usually, the grandparents take the children and raise them. Many children and youth are forced to work after the death of their parents and therefore can no longer attend school: “These children urgently need a perspective in order to escape the vicious circle of HIV and poverty”, Schmitz demands. - At present, Malteser International runs extensive health care programmes in order to fight HIV/AIDS in eight countries of Asia and Africa. Measures to stem the HIV/AIDS pandemic are combined with special programmes to combat illnesses such as tuberculosis, which frequently arise in relation to HIV/AIDS. The organisation is also involved in the fight against the pandemic as a member of the “Action against AIDS Germany” network.

Further information: Dr. Peter Schmitz, <mailto:peter.schmitz@malteser-international.org>

Malteser International’s Annual Meeting of the Board of Counsellors

On 15 March, 29 representatives of the SOM (Sovereign Order of Malta) member associations of Malteser International took part at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Counsellors in Paris hosted by “Ordre de Malte France”.

The President of Malteser International, Nicolas de Cock de Rameyen, opened the meeting with a speech underlining the successful work of Malteser International in 2006: Being active in about 30 countries with about 200 projects with a volume of 25.6 million Euros, the organisation provided humanitarian assistance to about seven million people. However, de Cock also pointed out that in order to maintain the project volume on the actual level and strengthen the Order’s impact in humanitarian relief operations, new financial resources had to be opened for the benefit of the people in need thus fulfilling the organisation’s mission to alleviate human suffering. Therefore, he encouraged all member associations to chose one special “Day for the victims of disasters worldwide” to run a worldwide donation campaign for the nameless victims of disasters.



Apart from discussing the general situation and strategic development of Malteser International, the meeting also provided the perfect platform to honour two persons in recognition of their important commitment to the Order and its relief services: The

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Grand Hospitaller Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager awarded Pierre Wuestefeld from Belgium the Grand Officer's Cross "pro merito melitensi" in recognition of his long-time merits as lawyer and legal adviser for ECOM and Malteser International. Furthermore, Serena Zapponi, the long-year assistant to the Grand Hospitaller, was awarded the Malteser International Medal of Merit by the President of Malteser International.

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“Ordre de Malte France” meets Malteser Hilfsdienst in Cologne



On the occasion of their visit to Cologne from 22 to 23 March, seven representatives of “Ordre de Malte France” had the possibility to get an impression of the activities of Malteser International and Malteser Hilfsdienst in Germany. After being welcomed by Johannes Freiherr Heereman, the Executive President of Malteser Hilfsdienst, the guests could listen to interesting presentations about the following Malteser activities: rescue services, medical services, civil protection and disaster prevention, first aid trainings, youth work, social services as well as foreign aid. Finally, the guests also used the opportunity for a visit of the cathedral of Cologne.

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