

On the SPOT.

NEWSLETTER
February 2008



IN MEMORIAM

Malteser International mourns for His Most Eminent Highness, 78th Prince and Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Frà Andrew Willoughby Ninian Bertie. He died in Rome on 7 February at the age of 78 years. His death means an important loss for all those who serve the poor and the needy under the sign of the eight-pointed cross.

From the very beginning, His Highness Frà Andrew Bertie, who spoke five languages fluently, supported and accompanied in an outstanding way the foundation and further development of Malteser International as the worldwide relief agency of the Order of Malta for humanitarian aid. He set up international conferences where members were invited to contribute to the Order's humanitarian strategies and encouraged a greater commitment to the spiritual side of the Order's stated mission to help the sick and the poor and to provide an example of living according to Christian principles. As Head of State he was a sovereign of a profound faith in Jesus Christ and a sovereign of an unfailing service beneath the eight-pointed cross.

With Frà Andrew Bertie, Malteser International does not only lose an important patron and supporter of humanitarian relief but also a convincing example of Christian faith and living. Nevertheless, relying upon his intercession, we can be assured that when rendering his life he also put Malteser International – as a work of the Order – in the hands of God and entrusted our organisation and its mission to God's blessing.

May the Holy Spirit fill us with consolation and guide and encourage all those who now bear the responsibility for the future of the Order of Malta and its future head.

R.I.P.

For further information, please visit the official website of the Order of Malta: www.orderofmalta.org.

AFRICA

DR Congo: Health care and nutrition programme in South Kivu extended

Malteser International has extended its health and nutrition programme in South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In close cooperation with local partners and supported by international donors, the organisation has been providing an integrative programme including medical, nutritional, psycho-social and food security projects since 1996. A crucial aspect of the programme is the rehabilitation of the public health system in numerous health zones. Undernourished and malnourished children receive regular treatment in nutrition centres. In addition to basic medical care and food security, Malteser International runs a particular programme in South Kivu to provide psycho-social and medical assistance to victims of sexual violence. A specialised clinic for traumatized victims of violence is now also receiving financial support through Malteser International.



Darfur/Sudan: Micro-nutrient campaign for more than 22,000 children and women



In cooperation with the Sudanese Ministry of Health, Malteser International carried out a comprehensive nutrition campaign for especially vulnerable groups – children under five, pregnant and breastfeeding women and women of child bearing age. During the campaign, vitamins as well as mineral and de-worming tablets were distributed. Beforehand, Malteser International staff had trained supervisors who later carried out the training of the distributors. The campaign also included social mobilization in the target areas of Shangil Tobayi, Abu Zerega, Tabit, Galab and Wada.

In total, Malteser International reached 10,477 children under five, 1,848 pregnant women, 7,563 women of child bearing age and 2,449 lactating women.

Uganda: Flood relief completed

After the heavy flooding in September 2007, Malteser International distributed mosquito nets, water purification tablets and medicine to the population affected by the floods. Medical teams treated malaria and pneumonia in the villages and organized information and educational campaigns in order to inform the population how to prevent an outbreak of a cholera epidemic. With financial support from the Foreign Ministry of Germany, Malteser International then trained village health teams and improved the medical reporting, especially the monitoring of epidemics. The project that lasted three months and ended at the end of February furthermore included the development of different materials for trainings and for awareness raising campaigns for the rural population.

ASIA

India: Income generation for farmers in Tamil Nadu thanks to traditional approaches

After the tsunami hit the Indian coast in 2004, the fields in Pushpavanam and Periyakuthagai were completely flooded. The soil was drenched in salty water and the harvest was completely lost. The farmers lost all their income and had to rely on meagre government schemes. Getting the salt out of the soil is a long and tedious process that can last many years, challenging the livelihood of poor farmers relying only on their small fields.

In June 2006, Malteser International started a project in cooperation with Venture Trust, focusing on income generation for small farmers, landless Dalit and women. The activities range from trainings, the renovation of farm ponds and the construction of check dams to the provision of seeds and bio-inputs for farmers and the implementation of income generating programs for women (e.g. tailoring) and Dalit (e.g. carpentry). The project propagates among others organic farming to the rural people, reintroducing traditional and mostly forgotten seeds and farming techniques and bio-inputs like organic fertilizers and pesticides. In the beginning, many of the farmers were suspicious regarding the “new” approach. Most did not want to give up the standardized seeds and chemical fertilizers and pesticides sold on the markets. Venture Trust used special plants that helped get the salt out of the soil quicker and promoted the pioneer farmers with bio-fertilizers supporting growth.



After one year, the farmers who had applied this organic approach could already yield double the harvest than farmers who kept on using artificial fertilizers. Seeing the benefits of the bio-inputs, all reluctant farmers took on the successful approach and strongly improved their harvests. In January 2008, the pioneer farmers have reached the harvest level they had before the tsunami. They have fully recovered and look forward to even better harvests in the future, thanks to the revival of traditional agricultural approaches.

Sri Lanka I: First children successfully reunified with their families

The de-institutionalisation project of Malteser International in the tsunami-affected Galle District in Sri Lanka shows first results. The programme aims at reunifying children that live in children's homes with their families and to prevent children from entering in such institutions. Many children in the orphanages are so-called social orphans. They live in children's homes, because their parents cannot afford to bring them up at home; they assume that an institutional up-bringing is better than what they can offer their child at home.

Malteser International started its project eight months ago, in line with the policies of the Sri Lankan Government and in collaboration with UNICEF. The programme already starts to bear fruit: the first 16 children have been successfully reunified with their families and 31 children have been prevented from institutionalisation.

Sri Lanka II: Hand-over of 25 rehabilitated houses in the Trincomalee District

On 15 February, in the Trincomalee District in eastern Sri Lanka, Malteser International handed over 25 new houses during an inauguration and handing over to families of Karimalaiyoothu village, affected by the tsunami.

In cooperation with its local partner organisation Trincomalee District Development Association (TDDA) and co-funded by the German football club FC Bayern München, the organisation has been working in the district since 2005. The purpose of the project is to provide new permanent houses for tsunami affected communities. In Karimalaiyoothu, Malteser International is additionally constructing a multi-purpose hall for meetings and other community activities. The programme also includes infrastructure for drinking water supplies, drainage and road construction as well as social work support for the villagers affected by natural and man made disasters.



Thailand I: Extension of psycho-social care at schools



Since 2006, Malteser International has been implementing a project to ameliorate the psycho-social support for children and young people in the province of Phang Nga, where the tsunami hit in 2004. The main activities include the training of “peer educators”: young people that receive a special education in psycho-social support and learn how to help their contemporaries by listening to them and referring them to professionals. Teachers are also trained to be school counselors, giving them the ability to better identify and help students fighting with psycho-social problems. Children with mild problems are treated directly by the school

counselors and by the staff of Malteser International, whereas students with grave problems are referred to public entities. Up to now, 46 children with psycho-social problems have been identified and treated and 29 school counselors have been trained by Malteser International.

In order to raise awareness for psycho-social problems among the students in Phan Nga, Malteser International elaborated changes in the curriculum integrating corresponding modules in subjects like physical education and social studies. The new curriculum has already successfully undergone a pilot-phase and one school has already adopted the changes. There are plans to introduce the new curriculum in the whole province of Phan Nga in the next school year. So far, 4,450 students could be reached with the changed modules.

All in all, the results of the project which is supposed to end in summer 2008 can be described as very positive, the students as well as the teachers have accepted and adapted the new curriculum. The project is funded by the “Wir helfen Kindern e.V.” - a charity foundation of the German TV channel RTL.

Thailand II: Biggest resettlement programme of all times planned

During their visit of the nine refugee camps along the border of Thailand and Myanmar in February, members of the US embassy, UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Rescue Committee (ICR) announced that the United States of America are willing to resettle all refugees in the camps in their country.



After informational campaigns in the camps about the conditions and the life in the United States, the registration process for interested refugees is supposed to begin in a couple of months. The US government is not the only one offering voluntary resettlement; twelve other countries promised they would also take in refugees.

This offer is the result of a process that started in 2007. One of the reasons is the assumption that the regime and the humanitarian situation in Myanmar are not going to change in the foreseeable future. In addition to the resettlement process, development programmes are planned to support the Thai authorities to take over the care over the refugees and possibly integrate them in the society.

AMERICAS

Peru: Second phase of assistance for earthquake victims

In August 2007, the region Cañete (about 150 kilometres south of Lima) was hit by a severe earthquake. Malteser International provided emergency assistance and supported the construction of 50 semi-permanent housings in the region. Now, the assistance starts its second phase. The Peruvian Association of the Order of Malta and Malteser Peru now concentrate their work on the two villages of Nuevo Hulacará and Cedros de Villa. There, they will launch a comprehensive aid programme for about 800 people. Amongst others, they will construct housing, provide individual help for the families and introduce different income generating measures – for example, they will build up a bakery. Within the disaster preparedness programme, there will be trainings for the volunteers of Malteser Peru. Furthermore, the Peruvian Association will support the clinic „Divino Niño Jesus“ in Lima.



STAFF

On 1 February 2008, Dr. Alexandra Piprek started to work as a Medical Coordinator in Myanmar.

OTHERS

Malteser International Lent Campaign 2008: 40 Euros for Sri Lanka

On Ash Wednesday, 06 February, Malteser International started its Lent Campaign 2008: „40 Euros for Sri Lanka“. Until Easter, the hydraulic engineering expert of the organization Suzanna Lipscombe reports on a weekly basis from Sri Lanka on her projects, the people she is working with and the situation in the south-east-Asian country. So far, she has been telling how rainwater harvesting tanks and bio-sand water filters positively change the lives of the people in rural areas. All the reports can be found on http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser_International/en/61.11.Downloads/61.11.06.Blogs/61.02.04.LentCampaign/campaign2008.htm.

Since 2005, Malteser International has been supporting the rehabilitation after the tsunami in Sri Lanka. Next to the reconstruction of villages, the work of the organisation mainly focuses on water supply, wastewater treatment and awareness raising about hygiene.

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Malteser International calls for putting aside one Euro a day during Lent season, which will then go directly to the water projects in Sri Lanka. If you want to participate in the Lent Campaign, you can transfer your donation to the following account:

Donation Account 120 120 120
Bank für Sozialwirtschaft, Wörthstr. 15 - 17, D-50668 Köln
Sort Code : 370 205 00
IBAN : DE49 3702 0500 0001 0258 01
BIC: BFSWDE33XXX
Reference : "Malteser International Lent Campaign 2008"



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