

On the SPOT.

**NEWSLETTER
May 2008**

BREAKING NEWS

Myanmar: Assistance for the victims of Cyclone Nargis

On 4 June, the first international team of Malteser International – in addition to about 40 local staff members already working in Labutta in the Irrawaddy Delta for several weeks – reached the severely hit coastal town of Labutta. With assistance from the German Embassy in Yangon, the team with two experts of Malteser International and two staff members of the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) finally received a travel permit to the Delta and are now supporting the emergency relief activities of the local Malteser International staff. Furthermore, the international emergency experts prepare the extension of the relief measures.

Moreover, two more cargo flights of Malteser International with emergency supplies have landed in Yangon in the morning of 4 June. Malteser International had organised the flights on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, the logistical preparation was provided by Caritas. Amongst others, the flights brought three boats which will enable the staff to reach people also in very remote areas. Furthermore, they contained three drinking water treatment plants as well as 14 tons of medicines, dressing material and medical supplies for the emergency projects of Malteser International in Yangon and Labutta.

Two water treatment plants of the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) have already been brought from Yangon to Labutta and are providing safe drinking water for more than 25,000 people per day. Staff members provide health and hygiene education and have distributed 5,200 soaps. Furthermore, shelter items for 580 households (blankets, mosquito nets, plastic sheets) have been handed out.



According to the latest official figures, the death toll after the cyclone that hit Myanmar about four weeks ago has risen to 78,000 people, while more than 56,000 people are still missing. It is estimated that 1.5 million people are left homeless and 2.4 million people are affected.

As Malteser International has been able to start the relief activities in the disaster area right after the Cyclone, they are now also bundling the assistance of other organisations and partners and implementing it.

The work of Malteser International is supported by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Caritas, the Israeli organisation „Latet“, the Canadian organisation CECI and the international network of the Order of Malta. But in order to be able to continue and to extend its relief measures, Malteser International is still and urgently depending on further donations. Our teams on the ground are the guaranty that your donations really reach the survivors.

To support the work of Malteser International in Myanmar, please transfer your donations to:

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 : "Cyclone Nargis"

More detailed information about the work of Malteser International in Myanmar after the cyclone can be found under

http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser_International/en/61.02.News_Press/61.02.01.Press_Releases/presse2000.asp
 and

http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser_International/en/61.02.News_Press/61.02.06.Reports/reports.htm

Recent photos of the relief activities in Myanmar can be downloaded under:

<http://php.malteser.de/cpg133/thumbnails.php?album=198&page=1>

Recent videos from Labutta can be downloaded under:

http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser_International/61.16.Downloads/61.16.04.Videos/Videos.htm

The regular projects of Malteser International in Myanmar are described here:

http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser_International/en/61.05.Projects/61.05.03.Asia/ald_projekt_liste.asp?region=2&sprache=2&land=Myanmar.

AFRICA

DR Congo I: Rehabilitation of Referral Hospitals in Watsa and Aba



Malteser International is currently rehabilitating the Referral Hospital of Watsa in the District of Haut Uélé. Financed by the Pooled Fund, the project aims at an improved access to quality health care for the vulnerable population in Watsa and Aba. The health conditions in these zones are precarious, the buildings as well as the health services and the sanitary installations of the hospitals are in poor conditions. It is also important to assist the local health authorities to be fully functional.

Within its project, Malteser International has also been rehabilitating the Referral Hospital of Aba. The construction work is almost finished. Moreover,

the organisation offers trainings for staff members as well as capacity building on drug and financial management, on human resources and on the prevention of infections. “With the support of Malteser International, we have already noticeably improved the quality of our health care services”, Joseph Ancoyo-Badriyo, director of the Referral Hospital of Aba, points out. The project will be finished by the end of August.

DR Congo II: Malteser International hosts sixth conference on victims of sexual violence in Aru



On 27 and 28 May, Malteser International hosted the sixth conference of the *Plateforme*, an association of local authorities, and several local non-governmental organisations which support victims of sexual violence in the Health District of Aru as well as staff members of Malteser International. Sexual violence has been a severe problem in the Democratic Republic of Congo for years. Even after the civil war, young girls, boys and women of every age become victims of sexual aggression every day. During the last twelve months, Malteser International has registered almost 3,000 victims in the district – but the estimated number of unknown cases is even much higher.

During the conference that takes place in Aru every six months, the members discussed the achievements and set-backs of their work since the last meeting and worked out a plan for a better coordination between them. Malteser International itself could present satisfying results of its efforts. With the financial support of ECHO, the organisation has been supporting victims of sexual violence in the district since 2005, concentrating on the medical treatment for the affected persons in order to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

Thanks to Malteser International, every victim of sexual aggression now has access to free treatment, including a post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) that may prevent an infection with the HI-Virus up to 72 hours after the violation. The organisation provides the health centres with medical drugs, promotion material and other equipment. Moreover, staff members offer supervision and formation to the medical staff of the District and cooperate closely with the local health authorities. Malteser International additionally coordinates the activities of all members of the *Plateforme*. On 8 March, the International Women's Day, staff members of Malteser International organised a parade in the stadium of Mahagi with hundreds of people from the town participating and proclaiming solidarity with victims of sexual aggression.

ASIA

India: Reconstruction after the floods and disaster preparedness

After the severe floods in summer 2007 in the north of India, about ten million people in the regions Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are still affected by the consequences of the disaster. Together with Indian partners, Malteser International started a new project to assist the people in the area by helping them to reconstruct their life and to be prepared for future floods. The project to build community resilience to disaster risks aims at the most vulnerable groups of the population in the area like single mothers and their children or people belonging to the group of the Dalit, the so-called untouchables. During the reconstruction process, the homesteads of 60 worst affected vulnerable households are raised and rehabilitated as mitigation measure against flood inundation. By raising hand pumps above the level of the floods, access to safe drinking water is assured also when floods occur. This is the first project of Malteser International in India to be funded by ECHO.



To improve the economic situation of the people in the area, the project offers a ‘cash for work’ programme for the flood affected families where they can help to reconstruct their homes and villages and get paid for it.

To prepare the people in the area for future floods, five disaster preparedness task forces are formed and trained in evacuation, rescue and water sanitation practices. 25 of the task force members are trained in use and maintenance of the evacuation systems as well as rescue techniques and practices. Five mechanised boats and 30 small manual boats and other essential tools and equipment required for immediate rescue are set up.

Sri Lanka I: New project for the prevention of respiratory diseases

In order to prevent the spreading of respiratory diseases like e.g. Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) or SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), Malteser International started a project to develop and test resource materials using a participatory approach for community empowerment in the South of Sri Lanka. In the first phase of the project, staff members will develop general health and hygiene measures and design a tool kit to educate the communities to protect themselves from influenza. They need to be empowered with knowledge and skills to combat the spread of disease and prepare them for any possible onset of an influenza pandemic. These participatory tools will be field tested and analyzed and recommendations for the utilization will be submitted to UNICEF for wider dissemination in South and South East Asia. Malteser International closely coordinates all activities with existing government institutions and with UNICEF Sri Lanka. The project is financed by UNICEF-ROSA Nepal.

Sri Lanka II: Successful deinstitutionalisation of children



After one year, Malteser International’s project to deinstitutionalize and reunify children with their families in the district of Galle in the south of Sri Lanka proves to be successful. Around 21,000 children are currently living in orphanages or children’s homes all over Sri Lanka. Most of them are there because their parents are either too poor to care for them or since they expect that their children are better off in these institutions. Only three per cent of children in Sri Lankan institutions are orphans without parents.

In cooperation with the Sri Lankan partner organisation Sarvodaya, Malteser International uses different approaches to address the overall problem: with advocacy and capacity building, the project team tries to convince local decision makers and officers to apply existing laws properly and in favour of the children. Awareness raising campaigns are organised at village level to inform the communities and their leaders about the advantages of a family-life for the children. At the same time, trained social workers talk to the families to explore other solutions than giving the child away. In selected cases, Malteser International also provides vocational and business training, mostly for the mothers, or even safe and decent housing for the family. Even the change of children homes into day care centres is being prepared so that local alternatives for daily care of children may facilitate the mothers’ need to earn an income.

Next to such prevention of being institutionalized, the Malteser International project team also assess the case load of children in selected children’s homes to identify either the natural parents, the extended family-network or maybe foster families for the deinstitutionalisation of children.

Thailand: UNHCR finances HIV/AIDS project along the Thai-Myanmar border

Thailand is home to 140,000 Myanmar refugees living in nine camps along the border to Myanmar. Since 1993, Malteser International has been implementing a comprehensive primary health care programme for around 31,300 refugees of Karen and Burmese ethnicity in two of the camps.

UNHCR is now funding the HIV-component of the programme with 42.600 USD for 2008. The main activities during the project include the preparation of meetings with camp-based organisations and NGOs, the implementation of HIV/AIDS intervention groups, the training of counsellors and community health workers, the organisation of school health education for high school children on HIV/AIDS and the provision of antiretroviral drugs in case of an infection. On World AIDS day, special activities like a drama performance on HIV/AIDS, drawing competitions and the distribution of T-Shirts are planned. Furthermore, a self-help group for patients suffering from HIV/AIDS and their relatives will be supported by giving grants to children whose parents died of AIDS.

Vietnam: Renovation of commune health centre in Tay Giang

In order to improve the health situation of the villagers in the Tay Giang district in Central Vietnam, Malteser International is starting with the renovation of a commune health centre. Tay Giang is a remote mountainous district in Central Vietnam, the majority of the population are of ethnic minority. The economic conditions are very poor and the living standard of Tay Giang's residents is low. The existing health infrastructure and the health system are unsatisfactory. Another big problem is the lack of infrastructure and transportation that makes it very difficult for many people in the region to go a distant clinic in case of sickness.

That is why, among others, new health equipment and the training of health staff will be provided in the Bhalee commune health centre to secure an access to medical treatment for the population in the area. - The project is financed by the German Consulate in Vietnam.

STAFF

On 01 May, Mr. Thomas Molitor, former Project Assistant in the Asia Department in Cologne, left for Myanmar to work as a Project Assistant there.

Also on 01 May, Mr. Vincent Otieno Oloo started to work as a Health Project Manager in Maridi/South Sudan.

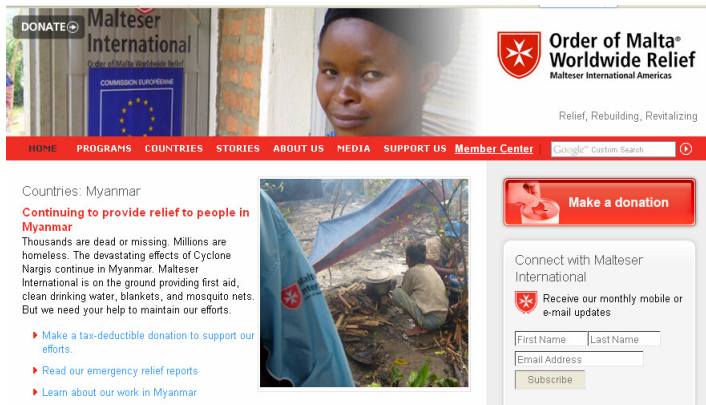
On 15 May, Dr. Joackin Drani started to work as a Health Project Manager in Yei/ South Sudan.

On 22 May, Ms Romy Blickle started to work as Junior Programme Administrator in Sri Lanka.

On 29 May, Ms Anja Simic started to work as Programme Coordinator in Sudan.

OTHERS

Launch of the webpage “Malteser International Americas“



On 12 May, Malteser International launched the brand new webpage of its American branch „Malteser International Americas“. – At the address <http://www.maltarelief.org> information about the worldwide projects and programmes of Malteser International can be found. One of the major goals of this new webpage is to increase the degree of popularity and awareness of Malteser International also on the American continent.

Ingo Radtke

Petra Ipp-Zavazal

Imprint

On the SPOT. - Malteser International Newsletter

Publisher: Malteser International * Kalker Hauptstraße 22 – 24 * D-51103 Cologne, www.malteser-international.org

Editorial office: Ingo Radtke, Petra Ipp-Zavazal, Kathrin Meier, Esther Suchanek * Phone + 49 – 2 21 – 98 22 155 * Fax + 49 – 2 21 – 98 22 179 *

E-Mail: petra.ipp@malteser-international.org