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ON THE SPOT



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DISASTER RISK REDUCTION - PROTECTING PEOPLE AGAINST FUTURE CATASTROPHES

Mangrove preservation, elevated water pumps, or early warning systems – disaster risk reduction is an integral part of humanitarian assistance, both in relief and recovery, as well as in long term development initiatives. "After a catastrophe, people need to be protected better than they were before. It's not enough to repair old structures", Ingo Radtke, Secretary General of Malteser International, states on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on 13 October. With the climate change debate, the



A Pakistani boy in front of his destroyed home.
Photo: S. Trappe

problems approaching the citizens of mega-cities and the increasing number of natural disasters there is a need to develop programmes addressing how to prevent natural phenomena from turning into disasters, to mitigate their impact and help prepare increased numbers of people at risk.

Be it by the reinforcement of houses against earthquakes and cyclones, by constructing flood safe emergency shelters or training village emergency teams and volunteers in the establishment of early warning systems: the focus is on community based disaster risk management and risk reduction aiming to support and to strengthen local coping capacities and to reduce vulnerabilities of people at risk.

In [Myanmar](#), for example, mangrove forests are being reforested to function as a natural shelterbelt and forestall erosion, new stoves that use considerably less fire-



A woman manufacturing stoves that consume less firewood

wood are introduced to the local population, and evacuation routes are prepared in cooperation with the local authorities and the village communities. In northern [India](#), water pumps are installed on simple elevated platforms which protect the pumps against flooding and prevent the surface water from contaminating the clean drinking water. As [Pakistan](#) is regularly hit by earthquakes, Malteser International has set up an innovative early warning system in the districts of Muzaffarabad and Bagh: a technology which detects the first waves of an earthquake – waves that humans can not perceive – has been connected with a alarm siren. So, the people will be warned in due time and win important seconds to leave their houses.

Read the articles on disaster risk reduction in [Myanmar](#) and [India](#) in this issue of *On the Spot*



A man wading through the water to reach the elevated handpump

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: INTERVIEW ON THE LESSONS LEARNT AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE IN PAKISTAN 2005

Malteser International has been working in Pakistan since the earthquake in 2005 and will continue its humanitarian work there for several years. Disaster risk reduction is an important component of many projects. - In an [interview mit Reuters AlertNet](#), Dr. Juergen Clemens, Malteser International Senior Desk Officer Pakistan, explains, what Pakistan has learnt after the earthquake in 2005 and what should be the priorities for future disasters risk reduction efforts.



What overall improvements in disaster management have been made since the earthquake?

Juergen Clemens: There were certain institutions at a government level before but these had been quite inappropriate with regards to funding, training and equipment. There have been a lot of programmes and

achievements over the last five years, but still there has still not been enough time to set up a fully fledged system which would be comparable to similar systems in many Asian countries or many western countries.

Has disaster risk reduction in Pakistan gained greater priority after the earthquake?

Juergen Clemens: After the earthquake, there was the slogan to "build back better" and there were lots of programmes to train labourers and construction workers to rebuild houses and public buildings to be more resilient to earthquakes. The Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has a team of monitoring experts to check the ongoing construction work on public buildings and intervene if standards are not followed. So definitely disaster risk reduction has been part of the overall reconstruction efforts.

[Read the whole interview on Reuters Alertnet!](#)

AFRICA:

DR CONGO: FLEEING VIOLENCE, FINDING SUPPORT

BASIC HEALTH CARE FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED AND VICTIMS OF SEXUAL AGGRESSION

They come in the night and attack the villages: The soldiers of the Lord Resistance Army (LRA), an Ugandan rebel group, loot and burn down houses, violate women and kidnap children to become soldiers. From December 2008 to September 2009, the attacks forced 30,000 people to flee their homes in Faradje town. They hide in the bush or seek help in other towns such as Aba near the Ugandan border, forming long tracks of internally displaced persons (IDPs) on their way to a safer place.

As one of the consequences of these attacks, access to health care and the supply of essential drugs and medical consumables collapsed completely in Faradje and Aba health zones whilst health centres in regions where IDPs had arrived were unable to cope with the large number of people in urgent need of health services but without money to pay for them. To support the displaced, Malteser International distributed free essential medical drug kits to the health centres in and around

the towns of Faradje and Aba. Additionally, a monthly financial contribution for the health centres was paid in order to keep them running and to assure free treatment. Besides, Malteser International organised free health care for the registered IDPs in the areas where they had taken refuge. So far more than 60,000 persons benefited from this programme of free access to medical care.



Mothers and children are in the focus of Malteser International's relief efforts

Since September 2009 the security situation in and around the health zones of Faradje and Aba has improved slowly. The IDPs are preparing to return to their homes. However, Malteser International will continue to take care of the population in need until the situation has improved noticeably.

Our main interventions are:

- Free health care for IDPs in local health centres
- Training of health staff to improve diagnosis and treatment
- Reconstruction and rehabilitation of health facilities
- Medical care for victims of sexual aggression

[Read more about the project!](#)



Waiting for treatment under a mango tree

KENYA: MOBILISE FORCES AGAINST TB – THE NEW NATIONAL STOP TB PARTNERSHIP

The fight against TB must be everybody's business: from the Head of State to the ordinary person in the village; from the Ministry of Health to the smallest community-based organisation; from the mega-corporate organisation to the smallest grocery store in the village; from academic to the smallest child in nursery school. This forms the basis for the establishment of the National Stop TB Partnership in Kenya: the primary purpose is to bring everyone together and to join forces in the fight against TB in order to ensure that this age-old disease is eventually eliminated from the face of Kenya and does not anymore cause the degree of human suffering and death it currently does.

Malteser International is one of the founding members of this new "Stop TB Partnership Kenya". The pre-launch of this initiative took place on 10 August 2010 in Nairobi and was presided over by Hon Beth Mugo, Kenyan Minister of Public Health and Sanitation. The official launch by the Kenyan President is scheduled for October.

Paul Ochieng, Malteser International Coordinator Kenya Programme, was the master of the pre-launch ceremony. He drew attention towards Kenya being the first African country to recognise the Multi Drug Resistant (MDR) TB and HIV/AIDS. On the same note he paid tribute to USAID as the sponsors of the event and the Division of Leprosy, Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases for ensuring the commencement of the part-



Paul Ochieng, Malteser International Coordinator Kenya Programme, at the pre-launch ceremony

nership. He extended his tribute to all partners and the founder members – among others USAID, WHO and the Kenyan Ministry of Health - for making the event and partnership successful.

Already since August 2001, Malteser International has been fighting against TB and HIV/AIDS in the slums of Nairobi by supporting: on-site examination, diagnosis and treatment, patients through personal care, advice and nursing tips for relatives, HIV and TB testing and timely treatment, treatment of HIV infected persons with modern, life-prolonging AIDS medicines (antiretroviral therapy). For more information about the work of Malteser International in Kenya, [just click here](#).

ASIA:

INDONESIA: LIVING ON THE RING OF FIRE MALTESER INTERNATIONAL PREPARES COMMUNITIES FOR NATURAL DISASTER



Where does the danger come from? Villagers are discussing a tsunami map.

enormous as it became obvious after the severe seaquake and tsunami in 2004 and again and again since then.

Since July, Malteser International has been working with funding from the German Federal Foreign Office in Manokwari district of West Papua, which is constantly threatened by earthquakes. This is neither noticed internationally nor even nationally in Indonesia. In the coastal

A big part of Indonesia is located in the so called Pacific Ring of Fire and therefore is regularly hit by natural disasters. The impact of these can

be enormous

as the danger of a tsunami with many deaths is particularly distinct. The indigenous and other discriminated populations that are living there are often not aware of the dangers they face in case of an earthquake or a tsunami. Even if they know them, they can rarely provide for the risks, as their social infrastructure is too weak.

Often, simple measures can avoid high numbers of victims during and especially after a disaster. To enhance the self-help capacities of the people in Manokwari, Malteser International supports the set-up and training of local disaster management committees and prepares local emergency plans with the communities. To inform them about the risks following a natural disaster, the relief service conducts awareness and education campaigns. Finally, a public earthquake warning system is set up to warn everybody in case of a catastrophe. Besides, evacuation centres are equipped adequately and evacuation trainings are held for the population. These measures are implemented in cooperation with a local partner, the Yakkum Emergency Unit.

[Read more about our projects in Indonesia](#)

PAKISTAN: AFTER THE DISASTER IS BEFORE THE DISASTER PREPARING FOR THE WINTER WHILST COPING WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FLOODS

It was the heaviest flooding since recordkeeping in Pakistan began: The monsoon floods that started in late July have affected 20 million people from north to south along the rivers. Currently, the waters have receded for the most parts of the country, but still several million people are in need of humanitarian aid. In view of the coming winter and future natural disasters, Malteser International is preparing first measures for a sustainable improvement of its beneficiaries' situation.

Much had to be done to launch Malteser International's work in **Punjab**, a province in southern Pakistan. The first step was an assessment trip where the needs in the fields of health and safe drinking water were easily visible in Rahim Yar Khan District. For example, the health facility in Mauza Khair Mohammad Chak is out of use and has to be demolished and completely rebuilt. Malteser International has set up a mobile clinic on the nearby village market. Altogether, Malteser International will have three medical teams in the region.

Safe drinking water is crucial for the prevention of diseases but also for the treatment and the healing of the patients. Therefore, Malteser International has set up three water purification units in the same region of Punjab. But also in the field of water, preventive measures are necessary, especially concerning the waste water treatment. If the water is collected in open pits situated too close to the ground water sources, these might be contaminated. Furthermore, in case of a severe flooding,



A man in Kohistan receives a family kit for his family including blankets for the approaching winter.

the pits are also flooded and bacteria and germs are washed away and spread. Besides the institutional provision of safe drinking water, Malteser International will distribute household water filters to the people still living in temporary shelters.

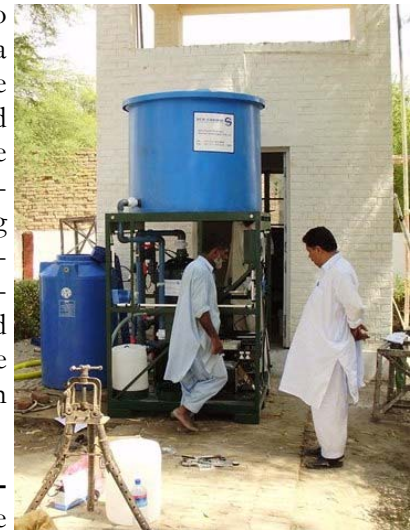
In **Khyber Pak-tunkhwa** province in the north of Pakistan, Malteser Inter-

national continues its activities as described in the [last newsletter](#). In the districts of Swat and Kohistan, medical teams are attending the sick in public health facilities and via mobile clinics in places where health facilities have been destroyed. The neediest that could only save their lives are supported by family and hygiene kits on the one hand as well as food or cash grants to buy food on the other hand.

Farmers that have been hit by the floods also need seeds, fertilisers and other equipment now, as sowing must be done in October; otherwise, the next crop will be lost. Such measures already lead over to the phase of rehabilitation and reconstruction: In the near future, canals and fields have to be rehabilitated and damaged or destroyed health facilities and schools will be renovated or reconstructed. But before these measures can come to implementation, the focus of Malteser International has to shift to the winter which will start soon. To secure people's survival, they have to prepare for snow and very low temperatures in the mountainous region.

Words are fine but you can't really imagine how we work in Pakistan? [Watch our videos](#) to accompany our medical staff to a mobile clinic and to see how our logistician prepares family kits.

The flood affected need our help! Support Malteser International's relief efforts and donate!



A water purification plant is installed next to a health facility



Learning lessons for the future

"The floodwaters are receding, but Pakistan remains a highly endangered country", Dr. Juergen Clemens, Malteser International Senior Desk Officer Pakistan, points out. For future disasters, preparedness is of utmost importance. Simple means can have enormous effects: Similar to the positive experience of Malteser International in India, alerting on the water levels alongside the river could prevent people from drowning and from losing all their belongings. Mobile phones which are wide-spread despite poverty offer new possibilities to protect people from dangers. "By mobile phones, manual sirens and by word-of-mouth people can inform each other very quickly from the north to the south about the water levels and the speed of the river", Clemens explains. People then have the possibility to save at least some belongings and go to evacuation centres that have been identified before. Water hand pumps must be installed at raised platforms in order to protect them against being contaminated by dirty surface water. Especially efficient: hygiene education. "Each year, a Malteser International hygiene counsellor can inform about 15,000 to 20,000 people how they can protect themselves against diarrhoea or other infections." The floods and the spread of germs had led to a high number of life-threatening infections with diarrhoea.

INDIA: EFFICIENT DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD RELIEF IN UTTAR PRADESH

More than 800 hand pumps at raised platforms will be installed in 209 flood-affected villages in Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh based on a model developed by Malteser International. In addition, the government has given its approval to implement those hand pumps also in 18 further flood-affected districts of the state to support several million annually flood affected people. In Uttar Pradesh close to the Nepal border, communities along the Ghaghra river in Bahraich District during monsoon season are regularly affected by high flooding. Each time the flooding causes people to flee the area and lose income opportunities as well as tools, belongings and livestock.

The availability of pure drinking water is observed as the most severe problem of the region at times of flood. Thanks to the raised platforms and additional staircases the hand pumps remain visible and accessible during the flooding when the villages and farms are inundated and people may avail pure drinking water.



A boat is passing by an elevated hand pump that provides clean drinking water in times of flooding.

These raised hand pumps constitute only one element of a comprehensive disaster risk reduction programme Malteser International has been realising in Uttar Pradesh since May 2009 with financial support of the European Commission (DIPECHO) and in cooperation with its local partner Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra (SSK). Further key elements are the set-up of an early warning system based on mobile phones and early warning task forces in the villages as well as trainings on village level in first aid and search & rescue. Communities are enabled to analyse the specific risks and develop plans to reduce risks and increase their resilience. They also learn how to implement disaster preparedness and mitigation activities like flood safe hand pumps, grain banks, raised roads, solar lamps and boats. People are furthermore trained how to tap existing government schemes on health, social security and employment to increase their resilience.

The recent flood in August 2010 provided a clear evidence of the efficiency of the project. The early warning



Search and rescue are important training inputs to strengthen the communities' resilience.

system immediately informed the task forces. The task force members disseminated the message through sirens and megaphones. Thanks to this speedy information, the communities were able to prepare in advance for early response and evacuation. Once the flood waters entered the villages and evacuation became inevitable, the search and rescue teams assisted the villagers in evacuation to safe places with the help of wooden and mechanised boats and in making temporary arrangements at the embankment. The most vulnerable families were provided with tarpaulin sheets and jerry cans to store safe drinking water. Big tents were erected on the embankment. First aid task force members provided first aid to the families on the embankment and in their hamlets and distributed 60,000 chlorine tablets and 50,000 oral rehydration solution sachets procured from the district administration. Furthermore, task force members supported the work of the community kitchens by helping preparing the meals and taking prepared food on their boats to the people.

Altogether, Malteser International and its local partner SSK proved to be an important bridge to the district administration and the communities to successfully fight against the flood disaster in the district.

[Read more about the project...](#)

In September 2010, a TV journalist visited the region in order to realise documentation about disaster risk reduction in Uttar Pradesh; the documentation will be broadcasted in the Austrian television (ORF) in January 2011.



Solar lamps bring light into emergency shelters.

MYANMAR: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS BY MANGROVE PRESERVATION

The mangrove forests along many riverside communities in Sittwe and Rathidaung Townships have faced significant degradation over recent years – mainly due to the pressures of human settlement. Households collect wood from these areas and use it for cooking and housing materials. In addition, with regard to the successful shrimp farming industry in Rakhine State mangroves have been cleared to make way for the ponds in which the shrimps are grown.



The mangroves are raised in the tree nursery.

The clearing of these mangroves has become a serious problem: Large areas of riverside land are lost to bank erosion every year, and with less vegetation, the villagers experience higher air temperatures, stronger winds, and scarcity of fuel wood, housing materials and lower fishing yield. The serious consequences became especially obvious after cyclone Nargis in May 2008: the decline of the mangrove forests in the Ayeryerwaddy Delta denied many exposed riverside communities any protection from the tidal surge.

Towards the end of 2008, Malteser International started a partnership with Mangrove Services Network (MSN) within its community-based disaster risk reduction programme in Rakhine State to rehabilitate



The seedlings are replanted from the nursery to the coast.

some of these former mangrove forest areas. Following a rapid rural assessment survey to identify the feasibility of planting mangrove forests, three villages in Rathidaung and Sittwe were identified and recommended for plantation. Malteser International and MSN then identified suitable trainings not only on how to rehabilitate the mangrove, but also to introduce alternative cooking methods to promote an alternative fuel within the com-

“Our village is located along the river bank and is experiencing soil erosion. Every now and then tidal flood passes through our village with big waves. The training gave us knowledge about mangrove plantation so that we can grow mangrove in a systematic way to protect our own village.” (U Hla Maung Than, Kyae Taw, Sittwe Township)

munity, and therefore reduce pressure on any future mangrove for firewood. In January 2009 two trainings on “Nursery establishment of mangrove and fresh water seedlings” and “Efficient fuel saving stoves and rice husk stove making” were held. The importance of environmental conservation and preservation were discussed and mangrove preservation committees (mitigation sub-committee of the disaster preparedness committee) for the three villages were formed. Two nurseries of fresh water plant and mangrove were established with the participation of the communities. Towards the end of 2009, a total of 8,981 mangrove seedlings were planted in the townships of Rathidaung and Sittwe.

Until today, the mangrove activities are well received within the community and the villagers are also well organised in their monitoring and protection of the planted seedlings. Awareness amongst the community of the importance of environmental conservation, reduction of their use of forest products, and their active participation in saving their immediate environment is a sustainable key to building natural protection, as well as avoiding degradation that can result in increased impact and vulnerability to adverse weather conditions and other hazards. In addition, following the stove making trainings, some villagers are now embarking on their own income generating activities by producing these new stoves and selling them within the community.



The coastal strip where the mangroves are reforested - ebb and flow.

“After the training, I have started to produce the new stoves and have found an additional income from it. So far, I have already sold eighty stoves in my village. Making the stove is easy. Raw materials to make it are common and available in the area. The new stove saves firewood consumption in cooking. Saving firewood hinders deforestation not to happen so quickly. And it can benefit the environment and to us.” (Zaw Ma Dat, Laung Chaung, Rathidaung Township)

[Read more about Malteser International's projects in Myanmar!](#)

AMERICAS:

MEXICO: SUPPORTING THE EMERGENCY RELIEF OF THE MEXICAN ASSOCIATION AFTER HURRICANE KARL

In mid-September hurricane Karl struck the southern Mexican state of Veracruz and destroyed wide stretches of land. More than 150,000 people had to be evacuated. Up to the present day the Mexican association of the Order of Malta provides medical emergency relief in those areas that had been hit hardest. The association thereby cooperates with the regional Caritas and is financially supported by Malteser International.

The relief measures taken include the distribution of

medicines and other medical supplies to health care centres and the deployment of mobile health care teams. These teams also provide medical treatment for people living in remote areas of the country. Malteser International has continuously supported the humanitarian relief of the Mexican Association since October 2007, when heavy flooding devastated the state of Tabasco.

[Read more about the projects in Mexico!](#)

HAITI: NEW LATRINES FOR THE “CHILDREN OF HOPE”

With curious glances a group of children inspects the new latrines at the compound of the “Children of Hope” orphanage in Léogâne district that has become the temporary home of approximately 45 orphans. All around the new latrines singing is heard, balls are flying through the air, and cards are being passed around. It is in this playful way that the children and teenagers - their age ranging from 1½ to 18 years - learn about the importance of the latrines and about correct hygienic behaviour.

Striving to establish better living conditions at the “Children of Hope” orphanage, Malteser International has built three so called VIP latrines („Ventilated Improved Pit Latrines“) including hand washing facilities fed by a rainwater harvesting tank. Additionally, a platform and a drainage construction for an existing water pump will be provided. This measure impedes the re-entrance of used water into the borehole pipe, thus improving the quality of the provided groundwater and preventing the spread of vector-borne diseases.

The “Children of Hope” orphanage serves as a home for orphaned, abandoned or repudiated children since 2001. However, in January 2010 the devastating earthquake completely destroyed the housing facility - including many visions and dreams for the children’s future. As a result, the orphanage had to be moved to another compound where the living conditions were very lim-

ited. The children had to stay in tents and neither had access to adequate nutrition nor to clean drinking water or appropriate sanitation facilities.

With the support of Malteser International and another relief organisation that is constructing permanent housing facilities the living conditions at the

orphanage are steadily improving. Additionally, Malteser International together with a local organisation implemented child-friendly hygiene promotion for the children as well as for the management team and pedagogic staff of the orphanage. Caretakers will afterwards be able to follow up and reinforce hygiene-related topics on a regular basis.

[Read more about our projects in Haiti!](#)



Learning about hygiene in a playful way.

OTHERS:

MYANMAR/HAITI: GYROS IN REMOTE PLACES



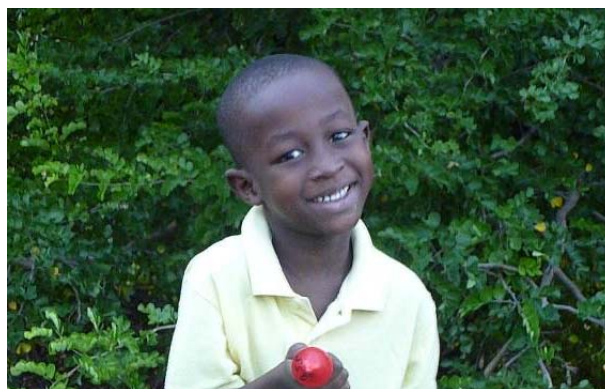
Up to 1,000 gyros have been dancing around the world in the last months. They had been sent out by the German Malteser youth organisation. The

aim was to let the little wooden gyros travel around the world and document their journey with photos and videos. On the website [Kreisel on Tour](#) you can retrace their ways.

Thanks to Malteser International staff members, two gyros had reached rather remote places: Gyro number 263 (on the left) can be seen on Middle Island in the Ayeyarwaddy near Labutta in Myanmar. Water engineer Seine Lai shows it on a recently renovated well before

giving it to the children. Malteser International is rehabilitating the health structures in the region and improving water supply and sanitation after cyclone Nargis hit the country in 2008.

Gyro 255 (on the right) has travelled to Haiti. You can see it in the hands of Karym near the Malteser International office in Port-au-Prince. Although the projects are primarily implemented in Léogâne region near the epicentre of the earthquake, Malteser International has an office also in Port-au-Prince to coordinate the relief activities with other organisations and the local authorities.



FAREWELL TO PETRA TILGNER, MALTESER INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

After almost ten years of exemplary commitment to Malteser International, Petra Tilgner, Secretary to the Direction at the Headquarters in Cologne, left the organisation at her own wish on 30 September 2010 in order to take on new challenges. Her professional background as well as her profound administrative, organisational and social skills were of great value for the entire team.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for her dedicated and committed work and wish her all the best and God's blessing for her new professional challenges and in her private life.

Julia Kost who started working for Malteser International in January 2010 as communications assistant will succeed her in the position of Senior Desk Officer of the General Secretariat.

STAFF:

STAFF POSTINGS

Headquarters

October 2010

Romy Blicke, German citizen, started working as Desk Officer Pakistan.

Julia Kost started working as Senior Desk Officer General Secretariat.

Janine Lietmeyer started working as Senior Desk Officer Africa.

Abroad

August 2010

Basit Ahmady, Afghan citizen, started working as Programme Administrator in Pakistan.

Christopher Bender, German citizen, started working as Relief Coordinator in Pakistan.

Carlo Miglioli, Italian citizen, started working as Coordinator Partner Projects in Haiti.

September 2010

Dr. Giovanni Bentivegna, Italian citizen, started working as Emergency Health Coordinator in Pakistan.

Dr. Rainer Eckart, German citizen, started working as WASH Coordinator in Pakistan.

Daniel Hilbring, German citizen, started working as Project Assistant in Haiti.

Edvard Hoegner, German citizen, started working as Coordinator Partner Projects in India.

Regina Kandler, German citizen, started working as Project Assistant in South Sudan.

Cesar Russo, Argentine citizen, started working as Emergency Logistics Coordinator in Pakistan.

Adolf Schuett, German citizen, started working as Programme Coordinator in South Sudan.

October 2010

Romy Blicke, German citizen, started working as Desk Officer Pakistan.

Eva Cabatingan, Philippine citizen, started working as Programme Coordinator in South Sudan.

Cynthia A. Miguel, Philippine citizen, started working as Health Coordinator in Thailand.

Alma Tabakovic, Bosnian citizen, started working as Programme Coordinator in South Sudan.

Gregory Vaz, Canadian citizen, started working as Relief Coordinator in Pakistan.

PORTRAIT OF OUR HELP:

ASSISTING PEOPLE IN NEED AND IMPROVING THEIR SELF-HELP CAPACITIES – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE ACEH UTARA HINTERLAND

Interview with Sofyan K. Umar, Coordinator Partner Projects in Aceh Utara (Indonesia)

His task is to monitor and facilitate the project implementation by the local partners: Sofyan K. Umar, 43, has been working for Malteser International since 2008 and coordinates the partner projects in the hinterland of Aceh Utara in Indonesia. In the following interview he explains how he is supporting the community development of the villages in the Aceh Utara hinterland together with the partner NGOs and why their work is so important.



Always in contact with local partner NGOs and communities: Sofyan K. Umar

What effect did the civil war have on the development of Aceh compared to other regions in Indonesia?

The long civil war in Aceh had significant effects on the lives of many people in Aceh. Most of them are still marginalised. Especially when travelling to the hinterland you will see that life there in most aspects is still below the normal standard of living. The conditions of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are still bad. It's very important to improve the knowledge of people regarding health and WASH. At the same time they need support to improve their livelihood. After nearly 30 years of conflict most of the affected conflicted communities have difficulties to start and secure their livelihood.

Malteser International is active in the fields of health, WASH and livelihood. Can you describe the approach of the community development project?

Malteser International follows a so-called participatory approach in implementing projects with local partners. The communities are actively involved in identifying their needs as well as in finding solutions for their problems. Community participation is a precondition for further support through our partners and Malteser International. Having been



Safe drinking water is not only a human right, the quality of the drinking water is also crucial for the prevention of diseases: this well in Alue Lhok needs to be rehabilitated.

working for five years in Aceh now, Malteser International has built up strong partnership with local and national NGOs in implementing projects. In addition, the local partners have improved their capacities according to their needs by various kinds of trainings and workshops provided by Malteser International.

How do people react on the project efforts? Are they reluctant or happy to accept new knowledge and technologies?

The village communities have a very positive response to the project. They realize that they have deficits in many aspects compared to the villages in other provinces and wish that Malteser International could stay in Aceh for a long-term period to support the communities that are still in poor condition. Overall, the improvements of knowledge and technology have been accepted with high enthusiasm.

Can you give an example for one typical measure in a community development project?

Since most farmers in the hinterland area have rice field as their main livelihood, we have implemented the organic Rice Intensification System (SRI) project. The farmers have been trained for three months in a "field school" on how to plant rice using the SRI system and how to produce organic fertiliser through composting processes. By using the organic SRI method they are able to produce up to nine tons of paddy rice per ha rather than four to five tons per ha using the traditional system. The traditional system also meant using chemical fertiliser that they need to buy and that also has harmful effects on the ecosystem.



How does the soil structure change when organic fertilizer is used? Sofyan K. Umar on a project visit.

What motivates you in your daily work?

My strongest motivation for the work in the humanitarian field is to assist people in need and to improve their self-help capacities. My philosophy in life is: Always learn what you don't know and be disciplined for yourself.

[Read the whole interview...](#)

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