



Registered association for the promotion
of medical care and social support in
Northern Samar, Philippines

Bugko, April 2018

Dear members, dear friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

Our annual general meeting took place on December 18, 2017, and I was happy to be able to come to Germany for it and see so many of you. It always pleases me to see how interested you all are in following the project in Bugko, and I'm pleased that new friends keep joining us to support our cause here.



The year 2017 ended with two typhoons that came one after the other, and right at the beginning of the year came another typhoon, which brought severe flooding and made some roads impassable. Our farm suffered greatly, and in addition to many plants, we also lost a sow and 13 piglets. In mid-January and mid-February, more storms hit, bringing more flooding. I saw people wading through water up to chest height to bring their belongings to safety. 151.7 mm of rainfall is simply too much. So the year began with natural disasters, which also made it difficult for our patients to come here. The governor of Northern Samar declared a state of emergency.



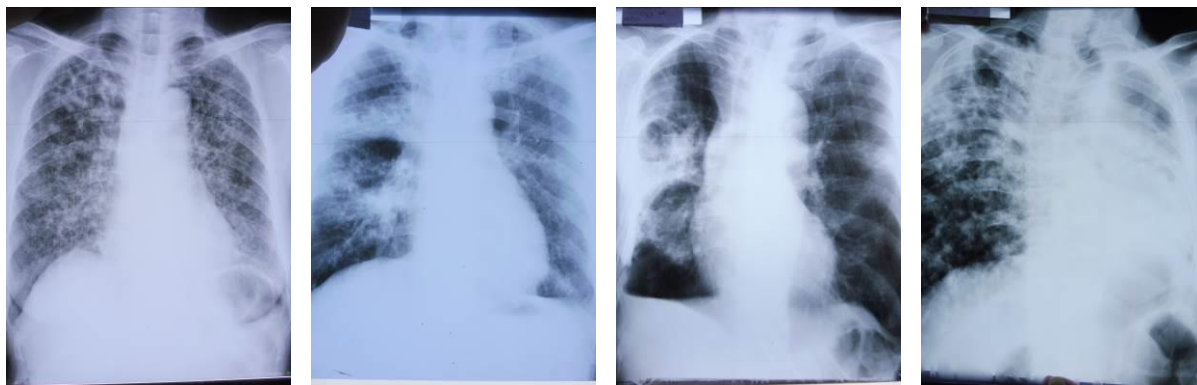
Due to the bad weather, Eva S. and Britta L., two dentists, arrived late on January 8th. Their flights were canceled for several days due to the inclement weather. Both had studied dentistry at the University of Giessen and were now putting what they had learned into practice. Unfortunately, they didn't have as many patients as expected, as they couldn't come due to the muddy roads and landslides in the interior. Both were shocked by the poor condition of the children's teeth, especially.



On January 12, Dr. Barbara Rautenberg from Bad Kötzing arrived from Bad Kötzing to help out at the clinic. She is a general practitioner and had already gained experience in the Philippines, having been to the country several times with the German Doctors. Patients, young and old, were in good hands with her. Unfortunately, she also saw many very seriously ill patients. We were happy to have such an experienced doctor, and I was able to learn a lot from her. In total, she saw over 1,000 patients. On February 6, her husband, Christof, joined us, giving us additional internal medicine support. He specialized in ultrasound examinations, and the patients were happy they didn't have to go to Catarman.



The dental department and the clinic were well staffed. Unfortunately, at the beginning of the year, we again saw many patients with advanced tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is one of the most common diseases here and often goes untreated, resulting in the death of many very young patients. The new X-ray machine is therefore a huge help to us in diagnostics.



On February 4th, Sister Veronica and I visited the state prison in Allen with a group of local religious. There, 98 prisoners are incarcerated for various offenses. We brought them hygiene products, laundry detergent, and some food. A Holy Mass was celebrated at the end of the visit. It was a very moving visit, as the conditions in which the prisoners live are very poor and even the most basic necessities are lacking. We hope we were able to help in some small way.



On February 16, dentist Dr. Lindner and his wife Eveline from Bad Krötzting visited us for the fourth time. Jan K. and Marisa W., both dental students from Aachen, were on the same plane, and on February 18, Yannik S., also a dental student from Ulm, landed. Under Dr. Lindner's experienced hands, they treated many dental patients.





In mid-February, the ISM (International Surgical Mission) team from Colorado, USA, came to our clinic again to perform outpatient surgeries here and operations under general anesthesia in Biri. This year, the team was very large, and almost 40 patients underwent surgery at our clinic. Many people cannot afford the often necessary operations in the city. ISM has been coming to Northern Samar for 14 years now. Throughout the year, we examine patients with hernias, breast tumors, fibroids, and ductless glands to prepare them for ISM. With Dr. Thropha Ann Wright, the patients were in good and experienced hands.



Our senior day care center is very well received. Various events take place, and the seniors of Bugko are happy to have a place where they can meet. They meet to cook, dance, play games, and attend presentations. The program is planned to be expanded in the future. The chairwoman of the senior community is very active. The seniors also keep the building clean and feel a sense of responsibility.



From March 17th to 20th, Dr. Klaus De Cassan from the German Dentists' Aid Organization (HDZ) visited us to provide further training for the volunteers in the fluoride prophylaxis program and answer questions. It was a two-part seminar with theory and practice. The practical part took place in our dental clinic and was attended by children from the fluoride prophylaxis program and their mothers. The focus of the seminar was on teaching proper oral hygiene and good nutrition. The problem for children here is that they eat too many sweets and don't practice proper dental care, which is why we see so many children with cavities and other oral diseases. All of our volunteers attended the training.



We've had three busy and intensive months, and I'd like to thank you for your diverse help here. We're constantly reminded that our concerns here are also yours. So, I send you my warmest greetings and wish you all a happy Easter.

Yours,

Sabine Korth

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