



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

Bugko, April 2019

Dear members, dear friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

I spent two weeks in Germany in December and was happy to see many of you at our annual general meeting on December 14th. Many of you travel long distances to hear what's new from "Mabuhay." A lot happened again in 2018, so there was plenty of information, photos, and discussion that evening.



On December 28th, I returned to Bugko. This time I was accompanied by Jutta Schimmel, a neighbor who simply wanted to see what we were doing at the clinic. Her three weeks were filled with many experiences, as shortly before our arrival in the Philippines, Storm Usman hit Northern Samar and caused much destruction. Flooding and landslides occurred in many places, cutting

off entire villages. I described some of this in my special report. Mrs. Schimmel helped with various aid deliveries and the feeding program, but her main focus was the medicinal plant project. She actively exchanged ideas with our "herbal witches," and together we tested new recipes.



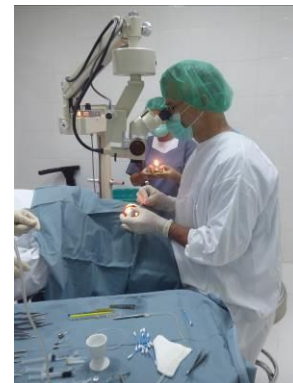
I would like to thank you for the many spontaneous donations you received after my special report on Storm Usman. I would especially like to thank the German Dentists' Aid Organization and the German Club in Manila. This support made it possible for us to provide immediate assistance, distributing not only food and hygiene items, but also clothing, school supplies, cooking utensils, detergent, medicine, shovels, tarps, and building materials. Once again, so many people had lost their homes, and it's admirable how they continue to start over from scratch. This tremendous help is only possible thanks to your help.





To our great delight, Dr. Markus Stephan and Karin Spatz from Bergisch-Gladbach visited us from January 22nd to February 1st. Dr. Stephan is an ophthalmologist and Mrs. Spatz is an orthoptist. They were delayed by two days because the weather prevented them from landing at Catarman Airport. Two years ago, they had their first visit with us, and even then, we discussed the possibilities of eye surgery. There is no eye specialist on site for the patients. An eye examination room was set up, and after much preparation, the time had finally come: Dr. Stephan literally made the blind see. Mrs. Spatz assisted him the entire time, and the two make a good team. The large suitcases they carried contained numerous medications, instruments, eye drops, and diagnostic devices. A huge help, since instruments and eye drops, in particular, are hard to come by here. Many of the patients reacted very emotionally as soon as their first bandage was removed. They could actually see for the first time and move around without a guide. During the healing process, the vision of the cataract patients improved significantly. A total of 17 cataract surgeries and 12 pterygoid surgeries were performed. A start has been made, and patients are coming in for eye consultations every day, so we're already seeing patients for Dr. Stephan and Ms. Spatz's next appointment. Hopefully, they'll be back very soon!





On February 10th, dentist Dr. Lindner and his wife Eveline from Bad Krötzting visited us for the fifth time. They were followed by dental students Laura M. and Alexandra P. (both from the University of Aachen) and Chiara P. (University of Freiburg). Under Dr. Lindner's supervision, the students worked tirelessly in the dental clinic. Unfortunately, there were still many teeth that could not be saved. Under Dr. Lindner's guidance, the students learned a great deal and were able to apply what they had learned to their patients. It was a happy group that also did a lot together in their free time.



From February 13th to 15th, we had a brief visit from Olpe/Biggesee. Sister Magdalena Krol, the Superior General of the Olpe Franciscan Sisters, came with Mr. Markus Feldmann, one of the managing directors of the Olpe Franciscan Society, to learn about our various programs and, above all, to see what everyday life is like at the clinic. They also had the opportunity to experience Filipino culture and life.



As in previous years, the ISM (International Surgical Mission) team from Colorado, USA, came to our clinic on February 18th to perform outpatient surgeries here and operations under general anesthesia in Biri, an offshore island. This year, the team consisted of 31 volunteers. This year, 74 patients underwent cyst and lipoma surgery at our clinic under Dr. Tracy Taggart and Dr. Tara Dixon—twice as many as the previous year. Both are experienced surgeons and have also volunteered in other countries.



From March 3rd to 8th, 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. Unfortunately, the children's problem is still that they eat too many sweets and don't practice proper dental care. This is why so many teeth still have to be extracted, as tooth preservation is often impossible. We have been running this program for 10 years now, and we are slowly seeing the first successes, because success can only be achieved through continuous training of the children in proper dental hygiene. Our volunteers serve as transmitters for the children.

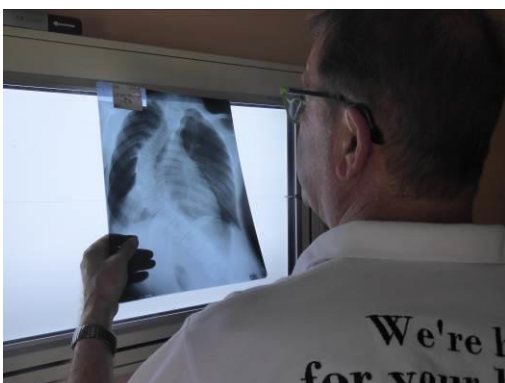
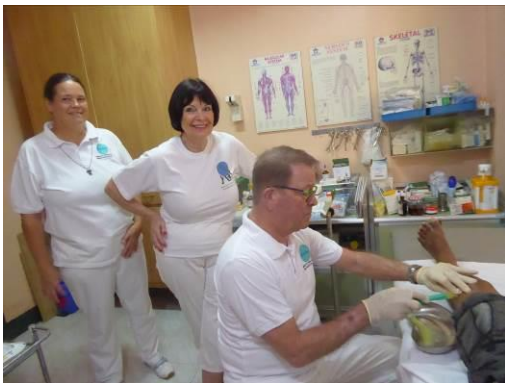


Isabelle S. arrived on March 11th, and Jessica T. arrived on March 20th. Both young dentists from the University of Mainz. They each stayed for four weeks and quickly returned home to the dental clinic, trying to save as many teeth as possible. Unfortunately, many extractions were necessary again because the teeth were too decayed. In addition to the dental clinic, they also saw many children from the fluoride prophylaxis program.





On March 20, to my great joy, my dear parents returned to Bugko. Unfortunately, they had to cancel last year, so the patients were happy to see the orthopedic surgeon and his wife again. Patients, both young and old, were in good hands with them. This year, fewer patients came than expected, as the rice harvest, school graduations, and election rallies were going on nonstop. Overall, however, they treated over 800 patients and even performed minor surgical procedures. Since we had a bit more free time, we used it to discuss changes and improvements at the clinic.



From April 13th to 15th, Father Dr. Hans Langendörfer, Secretary of the German Bishops' Conference, visited us with Dr. S., the Bishops' Conference's broadcasting officer. Father Langendörfer came for the second time. His first visit was 10 years ago, and he was amazed at everything that had been created. He blessed the indoor playground, which was installed with the support of the Hoffmann Foundation. The children here have hardly ever seen anything like it, and their joy was all the greater. The children didn't want to go home. The slide into a pool of balls was the highlight. The supporting program included games, a magician, and of course, spaghetti for the children. To our great joy, we will also be building an outdoor playground for the older

children. Preparations are underway, and I will report on this in the next newsletter.



Four busy and intensive months lie behind us, as you can see from the length of this report, and I thank you for your diverse help here. We continually realize how 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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