



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

Bugko, August 2023

Dear members, dear friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

From April 16 to May 14, Antonia B. Juliane O., both from the University of Freiburg, and Julia B. from the University of Munich came to Bugko. They had just completed their exams and came to put what they had learned into practice. They had also collected many boxes of donated materials. They had many patients and were able to assist each other in treating them. Maria and Begit, our volunteers at the dental clinic, were there daily and helped with translation. Like the other visiting dentists, they saw a great need for treatment. They were particularly concerned about children and were able to treat many of them. In addition to the dental clinic, they explored the surrounding area and made new Filipino friends.



At the end of May, Sister Veronica and I went to Germany. As always, it's wonderful to see so many of you.

Unfortunately, our stay was overshadowed by several deaths in the neighborhood, which left us deeply saddened. We will never understand why young lives are taken, but it's all the more painful when you know the people. Although we were there even longer this year than in previous years, the time was too short to see all of you. We are very sorry about that, but I hope you understand.

We returned on July 9th, and on the plane with us was Dr. Sohrab R. from Hamburg. He, too, wanted to care for patients with dental problems. Since he could only "escape" his practice for a week, he started working immediately. He was impressed by the dental clinic's excellent equipment. His years of experience meant he could even treat "difficult cases." Patients enjoyed coming, and he was assisted by a young dental student from Mondragon, who was able to learn a lot from Dr. R. The dental student is supported by the German Dental Aid Organization. We are pleased that he has shown such interest and is taking his training so well. Dr. Rahmani and the dentists who followed him were impressed. He also helped with translations for the patients. We are very grateful to the German Dental Aid Organization, as the young man would not have been able to complete his studies on his own. Dentistry is still one of the most expensive and lengthy degree programs in the Philippines. He still has four years of study ahead of him.



Since Dr. R., as mentioned, could only stay for a week, we were pleased that Dr. Leonhard L. and Paul O. followed him immediately to take over the dental department. Dr. L. has been working in a practice in Munich for years, and Paul O. passed his dental exam at the University of Mainz a few months ago. The two didn't know each other before, but quickly became friends and quickly became a well-coordinated team at the clinic.



Due to the long dry season and heat index of up to 46, the farm was a bit behind. We were able to harvest oca, beans, chard, eggplant, and fruits like papaya, pineapple, avocado, and lemons, but not as much as in previous years.



We are continuing the nutrition program for children. Currently, 80 children are enrolled in the program. Many of the parents have not yet found regular work after the pandemic, and rising food prices are making it even more difficult. The parents are very grateful and work for the children's well-being. They cook together, and then the children eat together in small groups. We often provide additional vitamins to keep the children well. When they are sick, the mothers take them to the hospital. We are happy that we have been able to run the nutrition program continuously for 15 years now.



Our old X-ray machine has been broken for some time, and all repair attempts have failed. This is a major problem for us, as we see patients with lung diseases every day who urgently need X-rays. Last year, we acquired a used mobile X-ray machine so we can continue to help patients quickly, as it is very important for diagnostics, especially since many of our patients have tuberculosis.

With the help of the German Embassy in Manila, we were able to convert this mobile X-ray machine into a digital X-ray machine. This has the advantage that we can send the images online for diagnosis in the long term, the image quality is better, and we no longer pollute the environment with X-ray fluids. In addition, the film and developing solutions were imported from Manila, and during the pandemic, we realized how difficult it is to obtain these materials. This is no longer necessary. Our X-ray assistant received an introduction from the company Medtrack, which also regularly services the machine. We hope to soon be able to implement digital X-rays in the dental clinic as well.



The senior citizens' program continues. Caritas Germany and COSE hold regular meetings to evaluate the program. On 2019, the new German representative for Caritas' Philippine projects, Mr. Michael Königer, even traveled from Freiburg to get a firsthand look at the situation. The senior citizens meet regularly for various activities, sometimes with more, sometimes less attendance. We hope that Caritas will continue to support the program beyond December 2023.



On July 21, all measures implemented to contain the COVID-19 virus during the pandemic were officially lifted by the president of the Philippines.

Our volunteers continue to be a great support to us and help wherever needed. Depending on their needs, they are deployed in the dental clinic, admissions, chart room, cafeteria, or pharmacy. The clinic stands or falls with them, and we can only be grateful that they have remained loyal to us over the years, as the original team is still here.



And more good news. Some of you may remember the young man for whom we had an artificial leg made because he was crippled by polio. This year, he graduated from college with a degree in computer science and was able to receive his certificate on two legs with his mother.



Congratulations!!

As you can see, the visiting dentists at the dental clinic are constantly coming and going. After the long pandemic break, we are naturally pleased that so many patients can be treated. And this will remain the case for the time being, as the dental clinic is already staffed until the first months of 2024. In this context, we are grateful for the ongoing support of the German Dentists' Aid Organization, which has repeatedly contributed to keeping the dental clinic up to date.

Now I wish you all a wonderful rest of the summer, stay healthy, and send my warmest greetings until we see each other again, hopefully in December at our annual general meeting.

Yours,

Sabine Korth

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