



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

Bugko, April 2025

Dear members, friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

Like every year in December, I was in Germany to visit my family and meet friends and supporters of our clinic. My visit culminated in our annual general meeting on January 5th, and it was incredibly nice that so many of you came despite the unstable weather. The hall in Haus Elisabeth filled up quickly, and soon there were hardly enough seats. Thanks to your support in so many ways, we were able to achieve so much in 2024, and this is also demonstrated by your attendance at the general meeting, which is always attended by interested parties and friends and is always welcome. Unfortunately, we lost 14 of our members last year, which was a great blow to all of us, as they supported us and showed their interest for so many years. Over the years, we have become almost like a family and share in each other's joys, but also their sorrows, even if from afar. How we would love to be with you more often and for longer, but the clinic in the Philippines does not allow it.



My return trip was difficult because the new year began as the old one had ended - with a lot of rain - and so my planned return flight to Catarman was canceled. Large parts of Northern Samar were flooded and the main roads were once again impassable. These natural disasters are becoming more frequent and are not making things any easier for us, or especially for our patients. The second attempt worked. After barely two days at the clinic, my voice failed me and consultations were conducted in whispers. This was very exhausting, but luckily my translator helped out, as she has been with us for a long time and knows all the questions I would ask, and the patients were happy that I was still at the clinic.



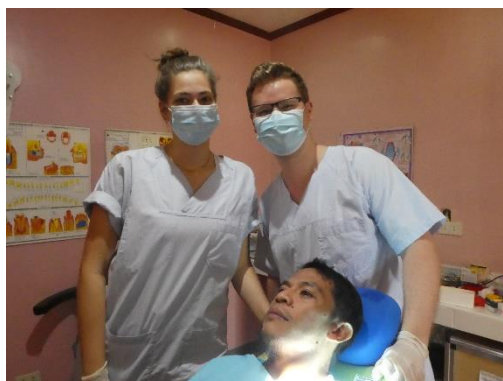
On January 15, our new Bishop, Noli Buco D.D., was installed. It was a grand celebration, and 15 bishops and hundreds of priests, along with other faithful from many provinces, filled the Catarman Cathedral to capacity.



Our first visitors arrived on January 23rd. Martin Braulig and Alma Cala from Manila, and Margret Braulig from Niederwerth. Like last year, they wanted to see what the Mabuhay Project was doing. It was good to have a little more time this year and to exchange ideas. Alma Cala was coming for the first time, so everything was new to her. She didn't know what else we do besides the clinic.



In the last week of January, the first dentists of the year came to us. Hanna W., Sarah Christine S., Laura K., and Philipp J. quickly had a lot of patients, as people had been asking for them in the weeks before. The dental clinic had been closed for almost two months, so the four of them quickly had patients.



On February 16, Lena K., Annika P., and Alexander M. (Freiburg), as well as Sophia W. (Regensburg), arrived. They immediately took over the dental clinic. For two days, Lena K., Annika P., and Sophia W. went on a so-called dental mission. There, teeth were extracted and prophylaxis was carried out for the children. The whole thing took place in a kind of "gym." They had been invited by the president of the Dental Association of Northern Samar. I believe the local dentists wanted to see if our German dentists could also treat children. It was a positive experience for both sides, and many treatments were carried out. When Alexander M. left, Fabian C. (Würzburg) joined the team for a week. Everyone was enriched by the lively exchange among themselves and the experiences they had each had during their studies.



Marion Schlohsnagel from Koblenz came to us from February 21 to 26. She was visiting her son Philipp in Manila and, like every year, took the opportunity to come and help us. She cleaned up our bandage supply store, sorting everything and labeling it so everyone can find what they need. It's a huge help, as I often don't have time to tidy up the room because I have too much work at the clinic. The labels in German and English now help volunteers find the bandages they're looking for. As a retired pharmacist, she also stopped by the pharmacy and looked through the stock.



On February 23rd, the ISM (International Surgical Mission) team arrived from the USA. This year the team consisted of 32 people, consisting of doctors, anesthesiologists, nurses, a pathologist, a gastroenterologist and volunteers. I greeted them at the airport. This year we topped all previous years and treated 504 patients in just 12 days. We performed 80 endoscopies, 188 inpatient operations under general anesthesia and 236 outpatient operations. Many of our listed patients were able to be treated and were even given priority because we are one of the team's partners. We have been working together for 18 years and the USA team is pleased that our patients are always well prepared. Our volunteers admit patients, assist in operations and prepare the instruments. It is always very exhausting, but in the end the joy of having helped so many patients outweighs it.



On March 2nd, Dr. Peter P. arrived from Alzey and worked at the clinic for three weeks. He had responded to an ad in the German Medical Journal and wanted to contribute his experience not only in internal medicine, but also in tropical medicine and surgery. He stayed for almost three weeks and saw many of our surgical patients.



From March 7th to 9th I was invited to Manila to give a talk about our various programs at the German Club. The German Club has been supporting our nutrition program for 17 years, and the members had heard about us and wanted to know what else we do. The patron was the German Ambassador Dr. Andreas Pfaffernoschke. It was my first talk in English in front of such a large audience. The hall was full, and everyone was very interested. Springboard and World Vision also introduced themselves. Right at the beginning the ambassador said that he felt a strong connection to our project and had already visited it. That was wonderful, of course. Our friends in the German Club are always on our side, and they tried to support us again that evening.



We once again hosted high school students for 10 days of internships at the clinic. They saw the clinic's various areas and contributed as much as they could. They were particularly appreciated in the dental clinic because of their translation skills. We have had a long-standing relationship with the local high school, and these internships serve to give students insight into various professional fields. On the last day, they proudly presented their certificates and wrote a short thank-you note for each of us.



On March 19, Dr. Chiara P. came to visit us. She had already been with us as a student in 2019 and now works at the University Hospital in Hamburg as a dentist and lecturer. The joy of seeing her again was immense. We had written and kept in touch over the years, and she had expressed a desire to return. Thanks to her extensive experience at the University Hospital, her patients were in good hands, even with more difficult teeth. We also explored the island a bit and reminisced. Saying goodbye wasn't easy for either of us, as the short time we spent together was very enjoyable, and Chiara is determined to come back.



Dr. Nicole G. arrived on March 23rd. She had studied in Romania and quickly began working with Chiara. The two went on another dental mission together in the neighboring town and gained a different kind of experience, as the patients simply sat on a stool and had teeth extracted. There was no other treatment, and both were grateful for their headlamps. It wasn't particularly back-friendly either, so both were happy to return to our dental clinic, equipped by the German Dental Aid Organization.



Dr. Christian N. and his wife Bärbel were on the same plane as Dr. Nikola G. Dr. N. immediately took over the clinic and treated the patients there, which really relieved my workload and allowed me to focus on other tasks. Since he was already here, he quickly settled in and gave me valuable tips and support for everyday life, so that I can better care for patients in the future. I continue to learn a lot from him and am very grateful for that. The patients were happy to have the experienced doctor, who not only greeted them warmly but also examined them thoroughly, something they weren't used to from the local doctors. He also performed acupuncture and minor surgical procedures. His wife Bärbel helped wherever a second hand was needed and also prepared the packages for our children in the nutrition program. We took a few trips to the surrounding area so that their stay wasn't just work but they could also see a bit of our island.



Male support arrived at the dental clinic on March 30th with Moritz H. He studied in Freiburg and comes from a family of dentists. His cheerful and fun nature was contagious, and in addition to the patients in the dental

clinic, we also went to the village and held dental care training sessions for the children there. Unfortunately, children's dental health is often poor, and so we want to focus more on training and preventative care so that more teeth can be saved in the future. Nikola and Moritz enjoyed working with the children, and the children quickly lost their fear of the "white" dentists.



The first few months of the year were once again very eventful and, at times, very stressful. In addition to the environmental disasters, we had many guests, dentists, and doctors who helped us help people in need here in Northern Samar. We can't do it alone, and so we are grateful for any help. Not all of you can make the journey to us, but through your many donations and messages, we know that you are very close to us and support our work here. Every donation goes where it is needed, and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteer board of "Mabuhay-Hilfe zum Leben e.V." for the tireless work they do in Germany. Many hands contribute to the success of our project in Bugko, and that means all of you.

And so, I send you my warmest greetings.

Yours,

Sabine Korth

Salamat (thank you) from Bugko!

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