



Bugko, April 2026

Eingetragener Verein zur Förderung medizinischer Versorgung
und sozialen Betreuung in Nord Samar - Philippinen

Dear members, friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

The year kicked off on an exciting note with my first radio interview on WDR 5 on January 2nd. I was quite nervous, but the nearly 30-minute segment flew by, and Mr. Wolfgang Meyer from WDR 5 guided me smoothly through the discussion. Many people listened, and we received a lot of feedback that will hopefully help make our association and the Mabuhay project even better known. A recording is available on the website or under Downloads: <https://www1.wdr.de/radio/wdr5/sendungen/neugier-geneugt/redezeit-sabine-korth-philippinen-100.html>



Our Annual General Meeting was held on January 3rd, and it was wonderful that so many of you traveled from near and far despite the bad weather. It's always a pleasure to see everyone and share ideas. A special thank you again goes to the newly re-elected board, as it's not easy these days to find people willing to volunteer their time for a club or organization. There was a lot to report about the past year, and the new website also attracted considerable interest. It's not completely finished yet, but it already has some new features and many pictures. It's available in both German and English and also features our new logo. See the top of the newsletter for more.



January was quite busy, and I was relieved that my flight took off. First, the plane had to be de-iced in Cologne, and the runway had to be cleared of snow with snowplows. Then came the nerve-wracking trip from Manila to Catarman, as the previous four flights had been canceled due to bad weather. Thankfully, everything went smoothly, and I made it back to Bugko.

When we opened the clinic on January 12th, there was a huge turnout. On January 14th, Dr. Georg Fobes from Bonn/Ippendorf came for the fifth time. He brought his wife, Doris, and their son, Tilo, who traveled from Melbourne, Australia, to see what his father was doing and to explore some of the region. His wife, Doris, worked in the greenhouse, packed food for children in the nutrition program, and prepared materials for our upcoming surgeries with the mission team from the USA. Some of the patients knew Dr. Fobes from previous years and were confident with him. Because he had been here so often, he knew our procedures well, and we were able to treat many patients. Unfortunately, he also noticed that many patients often arrive too late and are so ill that treatment often doesn't provide the desired cure, but only stabilizes their condition.

Unfortunately, Typhoon Ada (International Nokaen) struck northern Samar on January 16th, bringing heavy rain and strong winds that caused flooding and widespread destruction—not only on our farm but also throughout the surrounding areas, including fallen trees and damage to roofs and houses. Even our clinic roof needed repairs. It was a particularly tough event for Dr. Fobes and his family, as they only heard about it from my stories.



On January 18th, we reopened the dental clinic thanks to the arrival of three young dentists from Leipzig. Patients had been asking about the dentists for weeks and were thrilled that the clinic was back in service. A visit to the local elementary school was also planned to teach the children about good oral hygiene.

On January 31st, Juana Moira Rennspieß, Lara Franziska Blume, Danara Homann, and Laura Marieke Grümme from Halle took over the dental clinic. The four of them worked together smoothly as a team. Unfortunately, they experienced almost all rainy days, which kept them busy at the clinic. They also visited the primary school and were shocked by how poor the children's teeth were. They handled the dental clinic work well, and the patients appreciated the professional care provided by German dentists.



From February 14th to 20th, Marion Schlohsnagel from Koblenz visited us. She was visiting her son Philipp in Manila and, as she does every year, took the opportunity to help out. She tidied up our treatment room and helped prepare the operating room for the upcoming surgeries. As a retired pharmacist, she also stopped by the pharmacy again to check the stock.



On February 15th, Daniel Rossa, President of the Welfare Committee of the German Club Manila, and Michael Wisener from Oceanic, Inc., visited us briefly to observe the nutrition program and the

children. Their ongoing support is invaluable for implementing the program. With 135 children currently enrolled, it's evident how essential this support is. We have since expanded the program to three villages to better combat malnutrition. In our daily work at the clinic, we see the significant need in other nearby villages and hope to include these children in the future. The highlight for the children is always receiving their certificates of participation at the end of the program.



On February 23rd, the ISM (International Surgical Mission) team arrived from the USA. This year, the team comprised 32 people: doctors, anesthesiologists, nurses, a pathologist, two gastroenterologists, and volunteers. We had been busy preparing for weeks beforehand: shrink-wrapping surgical drapes, preparing instrument trays, informing patients, and more. Outpatient surgeries were performed at our clinic. In some cases, they operated on two patients simultaneously to make the best use of the available time.

The waiting list for endoscopies (gastroscopy and colonoscopy) was particularly long because this service is not available elsewhere on the island. And for the first time during the mission, a laparoscopic surgery was performed, a routine procedure in Germany.

It's exhausting, but we're all happy to have helped so many patients again this year, whether through free surgeries or endoscopies. We assisted nearly 400 patients!





On February 28th, war broke out in Iran, and we hoped all our guests would return safely to Germany. Airspace over the Middle East was immediately closed, and everyone was worried. As with everywhere else in the world, prices here also skyrocketed. We quickly noticed this in the prices of diesel, food, and gas. They are rising weekly, and once again, the poor are hit the hardest, as wages aren't increasing. In our region, fishermen are particularly affected, as they need gasoline for their boats, and it is often only available in limited quantities. Some gas stations have run out completely.



Before



Now, still increasing..

On March 1st, Markus Jennewein and Hannes Häberle, two recently certified dentists from the University of Freiburg, along with dental student Carlotta Keßler from the University of Münster, arrived. The three quickly bonded and looked forward to their first day at work. Despite their relative inexperience, they performed professionally, and patients brought even complex cases to them, which they handled effectively. Student Carlotta was able to treat several patients independently, knowing she could call for help whenever needed.





A week later, Dr. Simone Busch, a gastroenterologist from Stuttgart, Dr. Michael Schaaf, an oral surgeon from Bornheim, and his wife, Ulrike Radeloff-Schaaf, joined us as a nurse. With them, we had an ideal team in Mabuhay. Everyone settled in quickly, and the younger dentists benefited from Dr. Schaaf's experience. Unfortunately, one of the dental chair units wasn't working at first, but we quickly obtained and installed a replacement part. Dr. Schaaf handled the surgical patients with ease, which was not only exciting for the younger dentists but also a great learning experience. For Hannes Häberle, it confirmed his desire to pursue further training in oral surgery.

Dr. Simone Busch saw many surgical patients. Every day, young and old patients from all over the province came with a wide range of illnesses. As a gastroenterology specialist, she quickly mastered the particular challenges posed by children. She also had experience in acupuncture, which proved helpful to some patients. Dr. Busch was also shocked by how little the patients knew about long-term medication and how often they arrived too late, when their illnesses were already far advanced.

I know Ulrike Radeloff-Schaaf from my nursing training, and we shared many stories. After years of planning, she was excited to finally see firsthand everything she had only read about in my newsletters or heard about in meetings.

Besides working at the clinic, they explored much of the surrounding area, interacted with the local population, and learned about customs and local festivals.





The farm also began the new year with great enthusiasm. The weather delayed some planting, but the rice, for example, was unaffected by the heavy rains. With some plants, we could observe their growth daily. The farm's produce is very helpful in our daily lives. We use a lot of it for our own cooking and nutrition programs, and we can even sell the surplus. We recently started a worm composting system, also known as bio humus, to produce high-quality organic fertilizer and improve soil health.





The first few months of the year were characterized by many visitors and heavy rain. We appreciate everyone who is supporting us, especially during this challenging time. The resurgence of war is causing widespread concern, along with rising inflation. We will get through this together, and especially now, after Easter, we should keep hope alive that something new can emerge from the chaos of this world.

And so, I send you my warmest greetings.

Yours sincerely,

Sabine Korth

Salamat (Thank you) from Bugko!

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