



Bugko, August 2026

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

Dear members, friends, and supporters of Mabuhay!

Shortly after Easter, Elena Strohmeier and Lena Mayer—two newly qualified dentists from Munich—joined us. They were accompanied by Tamina Hantschmann, who had just completed her medical studies in Regensburg. Since Ms. Hantschmann and Ms. Strohmeier had known each other since primary school, they made for a very harmonious team, ensuring that both the dental unit and the main clinic were fully staffed. As always, the two dentists had their hands full; Ms. Mayer and Ms. Strohmeier assisted one another in the dental unit, while Ms. Hantschmann encountered a variety of medical conditions—including a few rare cases—in the clinic. A definite highlight of their stay was the medical/dental mission, which took place in Allen this time around. Extracting teeth while patients sit on stools is certainly a unique challenge, yet they handled it masterfully—a true testament to their professional skill.





Jonas and Peer Stobbe arrived on April 26th. Some of you may recognize them from our general meetings; they have been members of our association for years. Jonas had visited once before, nine years ago. They wanted to see firsthand what progress had been made on the project and get involved in the work themselves. Those four extra pairs of capable hands were more than welcome. Right at the start, one of our pigs had to be emergency-slaughtered; then there was a need for help in the greenhouse, washing the car, testing the rescue boat... The list goes on, and the two weeks flew by. Jonas had brought along toothbrushes, toothpaste, and other supplies from his employer, so we visited the children in the nutrition program and gave them a lesson on proper oral and dental hygiene. In addition to seeing the clinic and the various programs, they also gained a brief insight into the country, its culture, and its people. Let's hope another nine years don't pass before they visit again...





On May 2nd, Jonas Knollmüller, Jonas Eberl, Nam Nguyen, and Cosima Kolbe—young dentists, also from the University of Munich—joined us. Having studied together, they knew one another well and worked effectively as a team. They encountered a few very challenging cases but managed to handle them successfully by working together. In addition, they performed several root canal treatments, which aligned perfectly with our focus on tooth-preserving procedures. Mr. Eberl and Ms. Kolbe had trained as dental technicians prior to their dentistry studies, bringing a great deal of experience to the team. All four quickly connected with the local community and became popular among the Bugkoanon people; they, too, hope to return together in the future.



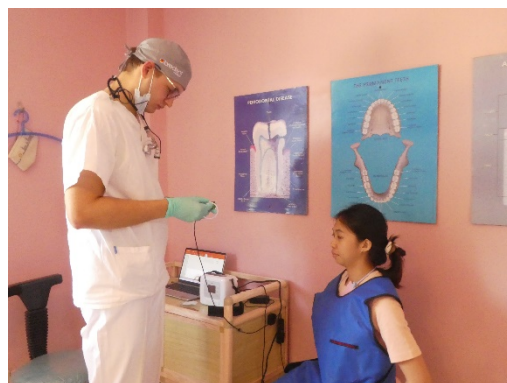
On May 8, Michael Schmermer, President of Siemens Healthineers, Inc. in Manila, visited us with some friends to see the newly installed X-ray and ultrasound machines. He was pleased to see that both units are in constant use, and we discussed equipping the ultrasound machine with an additional probe for echocardiography. This will allow us to expand our diagnostic capabilities for the benefit of our patients. The official handover will take place later. Thanks to Siemens Healthineers, we are excellently positioned to provide diagnostic services to our patients.



On May 20, representatives from Caritas Germany visited us. Although Caritas Germany no longer supports our senior citizens' project, they still come regularly to check on the seniors and their activities.



Dr. Dorothea Stefan arrived on May 23rd accompanied by her son, Valentin. Dr. Stefan runs a family dental practice in Scheinfeld with her husband, while Valentin is a dental student at the University of Cologne. Having previously trained as a dental technician, he and his mother worked hand in hand. Patients with complex dental issues were in good hands, and Valentin appreciated the opportunity to treat so many patients largely on his own. Many teeth were saved, and the photos demonstrate the excellent results achieved. Unfortunately, just as in a standard clinic setting, some patients arrive too late, leaving tooth extraction as the only option. Beyond their clinical work, they also engaged extensively with the local community. It was a rewarding experience for both, and we hope they will return for another mission soon.





On June 7, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck Mindanao—an island located south of us—causing extensive damage to buildings and infrastructure. Many people were trapped under the rubble, and there were fatalities. Even the German media reported on the event. We at the clinic did not feel the quake at all. Thank you to everyone who expressed concern and reached out.

On Philippine Independence Day, June 12, Mrs. Bless Ongchuan—the wife of our congressman—visited our seniors. She takes a keen interest in the activities at our senior center and is delighted by the seniors' active participation in the program. She plans to do more for the seniors in Northern Samar, an initiative that is certainly welcome. She presented a small gift to each of them, bringing them great joy.



While not directly related to the clinic, it is worth noting that Federal President Walter Steinmeier visited the Philippines in June with a business delegation. It was the first visit by a German Federal President in 63 years. Germany and the Philippines share a long-standing partnership across many levels. I received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany from him in 2017.

On June 14, we set off for Germany to report on the project's progress in person and to meet some of you. We were especially happy to see old companions again after so many years—including people from past assignments at the dental station and the clinic, as well as former high school classmates, friends, and relatives.

The association's board met to clarify key organizational matters and discuss the project's future. While remote communication works well, sitting face-to-face is better, allowing questions to be answered more quickly.

A unique experience for us in Germany was the major heatwave that had swept across Europe. We are familiar with such temperatures, but when the mercury hit 42 degrees Celsius on our terrace, even we started to sweat. The wildfires in southern Europe were also deeply concerning; it seems the effects of climate change are becoming increasingly apparent.

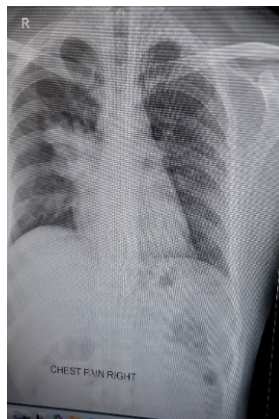
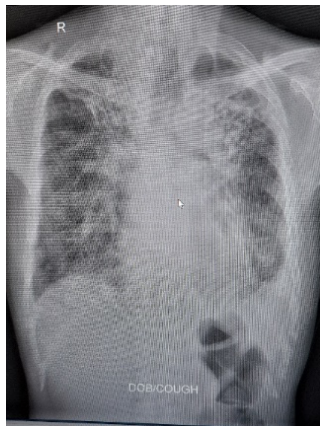
The echocardiography probe was installed on June 24—while we were still in Germany—and our sonographer received training at the same time. Since she had prior experience with cardiac ultrasound, she was able to quickly master the new technology. This additional diagnostic capability will benefit many patients who come to us with heart conditions. Our thanks go to the team from Siemens Healthineers, Inc., who installed the equipment. The echocardiography results are analyzed in Manila, and we can transmit the data there in real time.



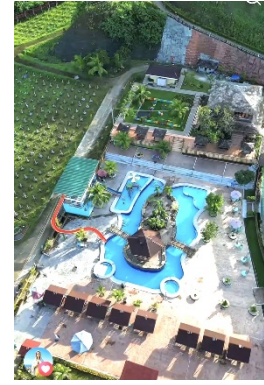
For the first time, the clinic remained open throughout July because we were fortunate to recruit Dr. Jhery Mae Alo from Mondragon. Unfortunately, she is leaving for Manila in August to pursue further training in pediatrics. She consistently supported us over the past seven months whenever she was not occupied with hospital duties. We will miss her greatly, as she possesses not only solid expertise in general medicine but also an excellent rapport with patients. Her presence was a true blessing for the patients, since we normally have to close the clinic whenever we travel. The search for a doctor to manage the clinic on a permanent basis continues. We are even more grateful, therefore, that several visiting doctors from Germany were here during the first half of the year—something I had previously reported on.



Unfortunately, tuberculosis remains a major issue, as many patients present late or do not receive treatment. There is a government program that provides free treatment to affected patients, but the centers often lack the necessary medication, or the attending physician fails to recognize the need for treatment. Much work and education are still required in this regard. Even without medical expertise, it is evident that these patients do not have healthy lungs.



Almost immediately after our return, we set off for our annual team-building event, aiming to strengthen our volunteers as a community through shared activities, communication, and tasks. We addressed certain issues and worked together to find solutions. This annual outing, which took us to Calbayog this time, always benefits the team, leaving them feeling re-energized and motivated; it also serves as a way for us to thank the volunteers for their hard work throughout the year. It was especially valuable this year, given that we have several new team members.



As you can see, there is never a dull moment here. Every day brings something new, and there are always fresh challenges to face. There is no shortage of work, and we truly appreciate support of all kinds. We could not carry out this work or tackle these new challenges without all of you who support us—whether through financial donations or gifts in kind such as disinfectants, clothing, shoes, toys, glasses, medical aids, medication, and so on.

All that remains is for me to say THANK YOU / SALAMAT!

I wish you all wonderful summer days—without excessive heat—and send my warmest regards,

Yours,

Sabine Korth

Spendenkonto:
Sparda Bank West eG
BLZ: 370 60590
Konto-Nr.: 3651274
IBAN: DE20 3706 0590 0003 6512 74
BIC: GENODED 1SPK

Mabuhay – Hilfe zum Leben e.V.
Geschäftsstelle:
An den Eichen 18
53125 Bonn
<https://www.mabuhay-ev.de/>

Amtsgericht Bonn
VR 8364