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Sudan

A cholera outbreak in southern Sudan is the result of the poor quality of water of the Yei River, which is a main source of drinking water, and over 1,000 people have been struck with the illness. The Sovereign Order of Malta is providing equipment and medical care to the victims of the outbreak of the city of Yei.

As you may recall, the Sovereign Order of Malta has been at the forefront in treating sleeping sickness in Yei, Sudan. The disease, which is caused by a parasite that is transferred to human through the tsetse fly, is 100% fatal if it remains untreated. The Sovereign Order of Malta is active in vector control through the distribution of tsetse fly traps. Facilities in Yei County are in place to test for, treat and monitor sleeping sickness. The Sovereign Order of Malta also works to further educate the local population on ways to prevent the illness. A WHO evaluation of the Sovereign Order of Malta program stated “this is the first time that such a good result has been achieved.”

Kenya

Due to the lack of rain during both rainy seasons in 2005, Kenya is experiencing an acute food shortage. Kenya’s President, Mwai Kibaki, has declared a state of national disaster in the areas that are most affected. The Sovereign Order of Malta has sent an assessment team to the region to determine the best strategy to meet urgent needs of those affected. A recent UN estimate puts the number of people who will be affected by the food shortage at 3.5 million.

The Sovereign Order of Malta continues its tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS program in Nairobi, Kenya. Eight laboratories have been established in Nairobi’s slums, where the Sovereign Order of Malta’s staff offers testing and treatment, as well as healthcare training for the local population. It is a credit to these workers that testing for HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis is on the rise.

India

In the north of Gujarat, India the Sovereign Order of Malta is focusing on providing preschool education to three groups that are traditionally discriminated against due to the persistence of the rigid caste system: the Koli who are original inhabitants of Gujarat, the Dalits, also called the untouchables (the lowest caste), and the Muslim minority. Public works programs have excluded these groups in favor of landowners. Illiteracy is a wide-spread problem because children must work in the fields or face social discrimination at school due to their background.

In order to empower these people, our local partner organization St. Xavier’s Non-Formal Education Society (SXNFES) runs a preschool for 1,200 children that prepares children between the ages of three and six years-old for further education. Informal courses in writing and reading are also offered for older children. A daily meal is also provided for the children.

Programs for parents stress the importance of education for their children's future, and only two years after having started this program, the number of poor children that now go to school has already risen significantly. Malteser International will continue its work in Gujarat for another three years.

Indonesia

Just over one year after the devastating tsunami hit, progress continues in the rehabilitation and development of Indonesia. The Sovereign Order of Malta has already built 115 homes in two villages near Lhokseumawe, and another 117 are under construction. The Sovereign Order of Malta has completed construction of a new health center on the western coast of Sumatra that opened at the end of February, and is staffed by the national state health department workers. Two other health centers are currently under construction as well.

Afghanistan

The Sovereign Order of Malta is working with children between the ages of five and twelve years old in Kabul, Afghanistan, who spend their days unattended in the street. Working in partnership with the Cooperation Center for Afghanistan's Rehabilitation and Development, the Sovereign Order of Malta will be offering daily care, school lessons, and hot meals to 160 children from impoverished families in Kabul, in the hopes of helping them recover and move toward normalcy and a better future. In the western part of Kabul alone, 15,000 families live in severe poverty. It is estimated that over 2,500 families are single parent families, with an additional estimated 1,000 children having lost both parents.

Mexico/Guatemala

The local associations of the Order of Malta of Mexico and Guatemala have been working to rebuild areas devastated by the flooding and mudslides triggered by Hurricane Stan in October 2005. In Mexico, a tortilla factory was established by the Order, which provides not only food to those affected, but also an economic base for the residents as they now also have a place of employment. In Guatemala, the Order has started a program to boost the social sector programs with the goal to make healthcare more effective and accessible than it was before Hurricane Stan struck.

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