

Report on the third Mission of Mercy to Sri Lanka, October 8th – 31st, 2005



(from left to right: Bindu, Hans, Hildegard, Karin, Chandrani, Manfred; in the front: Christine)

Saturday, October 8th, Christine Heinrichs, Karin Tietz as well as Hildegard and Manfred Peter started the third Mission of Mercy to Sri Lanka. Hans Heinrichs followed one week later. Christine and Karin took along additional 90 Kilos of donations in kind (charged by the airline Condor with € 140,- only – a bargain). Hildegard and Manfred would have been willing to take as well donations with them but they learned during their travel arrangements, that Lufthansa would have taken the cargo for free to Chennai however Sri Lankan Airlines would have charged €18,- for each Kilo from Chennai to Colombo although the goods had been designed for their own fellow countrymen. The result was that the collected goods will reach their addressees not before February 2006.

On **Sunday, October 9th,** we met with our Sinhalese confidants to discuss the upcoming projects.

Monday, October 10th, we contacted two families who would like to adopt a god parenthood, rang up the project director of the school in Payagala to clarify possible needs of that school and finally spent quite a number of hours sorting medical and other donated goods (walkers, children clothes, toys and school material).

Tuesday, October 11th, 2005, we inspected the primary school in Panadura that is heavily damaged by the tsunami. Three of the five schoolhouses are totally destroyed, the remaining two are going to be provisionally repaired by a German. As a matter of fact it is about a school for the poor, that doesn't receipt any aid money from the government. At the time of our visit about 120 pupils are attending school. Before the tsunami it had been 1200. Here is a definitely demand for support. Highest priority has the building of

schoolhouses as the pupils are spread on several far distance school in the moment. A German law firm has promised financial support. Afterwards meeting with the head teacher to discuss requirements and necessary building projects. We agreed on another meeting on October 24th to talk about the estimates.



Visit of the camp of the wooden houses in Payagala. Most of the families are still living in these houses that had been built by our organisation. We were glad to see, that the Red Cross had replaced at least a few of the wooden houses by stone houses. There was lot of joy because of the children clothes and toys that we brought along to the families. After that we visited our colony in Hettimulla. Here we saw that the road that we had commissioned was almost finished to the tar. Just the final cover was still missing.



We looked quite surprised when we inspected our most ambitious project, the ten felicitous stone houses. During a construction time of eight months an average of 50 (!) workmen had an assured income. On Monday, October 17th, our ten stone houses are going to be handed over to ten families in accordance to Buddhistical tradition.

In the evening we meet Richmond Wijesekera (former school head master) to deliver the god parenthood financial support for his nephew (whose parents lost their life in occasion of the train casualty during the tsunami). In our conversation Mr. Wijeserka proposed to support a asylum for disabled persons in Galle, that was heavily damaged by the tsunami. We plan to visit the asylum on October 23rd.

Wednesday, October 12th, 2005 we went together with Nilani Kumari (sewer, beach shop). Due to the tsunami she lost her professional existence that supported her whole family. We delivered a one-time contribution donated by a Lions-Club that shall enable her to start her profession once again. After that we met Margaret Reed of an private British Organisation named "Rebuilding Sri Lanka" for an exchange of experiences. This group also operates since January like we do and they have built wooden houses and lots of more things in Payagala as well, so we were able to coordinate how to work as efficient as possible

Thursday, October 13th, 2005
 Visit of Darmapala Vidiyala School in Gomate, Bentota. We handed over school uniforms and shoes for approx. 200 pupils and have been very emotional because of the cordially receipt.



Again we visited the Bentota Hospital (see Travel Report 1). The chief physician and head of department guided us on a joint survey through the house. During this tour we could see for ourselves the unimaginable state of circumstances there has to be worked. There is a lack of almost everything. Not even lockable medicine cupboards for storing drugs are existing. Spontaneously we've decided to acquire 8 medicine chests.



Sickroom



Examination table

Friday, October 14th, 2005
 Visitation trip in a southward direction. Here we had to realize that a lot of families still lived in

tents or wooden barracks. When we talked to the affected families we learned that except of the primary food donation no further support by the government arrived. Only because of several donations made by private persons very few construction projects had been possible to be tackled. We delivered walking frames to three disabled persons.

Saturday, October 15th, 2005

Exchange of experiences with Lotti Loosli; she is from Switzerland, witnessed the tsunami herself and stayed here since then to live here and to give support actively.



Sunday, October 16th, 2005

Transfer of the second god parenthood donation to Ayantha (blind girl – see Travel Report 2). She and her family are so happy because of the god parenthood.



Monday, October 17th, 2005

Beginning of the three day festivities for the inauguration of our stone house camp "Coconut Star Garden". It started with a Perehara (procession), when a 500 Kg Buddha-stature was carried from the temple of the village Moragalla to our camp in the village of Hettimulla. The procession was joint by Kandy dancers, drummers, whip crackers, praying women and much more. Hundreds of people were watching this from the roadside. Temporarily the road even had to be blocked by the police. After reaching the camp the Buddha-stature was positioned in the prepared temple. Several commemorative and acceptance speeches followed. Afterwards a ceremonial hand-over of keys to the new residents followed. At 9:30 pm a praying rite was hold on an especially built platform with a paper pavilion by several monks. This ceremony took the whole night.





Tuesday, October 18th, 2005

Mornings till 11:30 am more praying ceremonies followed by the ritualistic entering of 56 monks. The monks spread into all of the houses to (more praying) and have been feasted according to Singhalese custom. Even we had been honoured by being blessed by these monks.



Wednesday, October 19th, 2005

A Reggae party was celebrated by residents, relatives and neighbours of the housing estate.

Thursday, October 20th, 2005

By order of an lawyer's office we have inspected the extensively destroyed primary school in Payagala an met with a person in charge from Colombo. The re-build up of the school will be managed by a community from Singapore, however the building licence isn't issued yet so that it will not be possible to operate that school before the end of 2006. Then we will have to find out whether there is a need of furniture an education material.

For a family that was formerly living in the tent camp of Kaluntara, we have decided to buy material to build a permanent house of stones. The paterfamilias is construction worker an will be able to build the house himself with the provided material.

Friday, October 21st, 2005

To the head of department of Bentota Hospital we handed over the eight lockable medicine cupboards. We asked him to give us a list itemizing the most urgently needed medical demand, such as stethoscopes, medical equipment, examination couch etc. We will try to obtain this demand and appliances in the next month bit by bit.



Saturday, October 22nd, 2005

The charitable trust of a German universal bank provided us € 15.000,- for the Bentota Gamini School. During a ceremonial act we handed the money over. It will be used to reconstruct and expand the library and to build one more class room.



Sunday, October 23rd, 2005

Visit of „Sambodhi Home“, an asylum for disabled people in Galle. This house was very much damaged by the tsunami an fifty-two handicapped persons even died. In the moment sixty-two mentally handicapped and/or disabled people live here and receive their whole livelihood (food, drinks, clothing etc.) by bounties. The wall covering to be seen from the road side showed a large display telling that the “Malteser International” have assumed to refurbish the home and it seemed as if they would already have started with their aid. However when we have entered the asylum, we learned that this was a false impression. All adjacent buildings including the emergency kitchen have been in a miserable condition.



Kitchen



Toilet

We have hardly seen anything worse during our visits of Sri Lanka (it is remarkable that the branch of “Malteser International” that is located 15 minutes north in Dondandura is already completely renovated). The donations that we carried with us as there where gas cookers, crutches, medicine, school equipment, rice and other food was received with gratefulness. We can't imagine how this shall go on – inhumane is a word much to weak to subscribe this situation. The display from “Malteser International” pronounced the project to take from April till October 2005.

Except of the renovation of the outside wall covering nothing happened during the last seven month. We will try to give further aid step by step.



Dorm room

Monday, October 24th, 2005

We visit the Elementary School in Panadura. The demand for teachers is - depending on the number of school classes - covered and paid by the government. This does not apply for school buildings and teaching material. The school is possessing book (stacked on the floor) but does not own bookcases. Our funds enabled us to provide three large bookcases for the school books. The music teacher grieved that there are no instrument available for music lessons of the pupils. We have initiated the purchase of flutes, drums, harmonicas, triangles etc. We also purchase the missing sports equipment to the sports teacher. We decided for the future to make efforts to continue the supply of teaching material to that school accordant to the financial possibilities of our society.

The rector of the school, Mrs. Seneviratna, delivered a plan to us, containing her vision of an two floors building for eight class rooms.





We asked a local building company to give us an estimate for such a school building and had to learn, that the price exceeds our financial possibilities by far. Because of the mass of concrete that is necessary on the sandy ground as well as because of the heavy weight resulting of the special reinforcement the estimate of costs added up to € 55.000,-. The estimate for a one floor school building with four class rooms for 160 pupils is approx. € 30.000,-. We therefore decided in favour for the second alternative. Begin of the construction is planned to be end of 2005. Chairs and tables had been saved during the tsunami so they are available in adequate quantity.

Tuesday, October 25th, 2005

Today we have visited three Sinhalese families that had been recommended to us for god parenthoods. The mother of the first family is paraplegic since 11 years. 18 months ago her husband died of heart attack. On top of that the tsunami destroyed her house totally. Now she lives together with her three sons (11, 17 an 18 years old) in a little stone house established by a friendly English relief organisation. Two of her sons still attend school, one is trying to find a apprenticeship training position as a mechanic. The only income they have is a food-donation of 800 Rupees (€ 6,67) from the government. We have given 3.000 Rupees to this family as a food-donation.



The second family lives with grandmother, father, mother and two children in a very small wooden house in the hinterland. The third child (a son of 13 years) had to be taken into a friendly family because of the lack of space. The 14 years old daughter attends school. The 7 ½ years old daughter is mentally handicapped and spasticity. The father is restrained in working by a lamed foot caused by a working accident. To this family we also gave a food-donation of 3.000,- Rupees.



In the third family the father has a job as a night watchman that he attends, but the two children (7 ½ and 11 years old) are spastically and mentally disabled by birth. The eleven years old son is attending a school for deaf-mutes. The earning of the father is just enough to pay the needed medicine. To this family too we gave 3.000,- Rupees.



We will convey god parenthoods to all three families.

In the afternoon we have visited Wijesinghe Children's Home, an orphanage for girls in Induruwa. Fifty-four orphans (aged three till sixteen years old) are living there, each receiving 300 Rupees per month (€ 2,50) by the government. We donated stuffed animals, toys, painting and school material. There was a great joy.



Wednesday, October 26th, 2005

Also a lot of joy we could bring to the children of our stone house camp in Hettimulla by providing equipment for their playground.

Thursday, October 27th, 2005

We deliver an financial support to seven former owners of beach shops in order to enable them to start their business once again after the tsunami destroyed their shops totally.

Friday, October 28th, 2005

Due to the co-operation of Anita and Roland Pommer of "Hilfe für Sri Lanka e.V." in Großhansdorf we were able to finance two new wells for the water supply of approx. 100 families. The realisation is managed by Lotti Loosli.

Our next Mission of Mercy will last again three weeks and starts February 11th, 2006.

Munich, November 11th, 2005