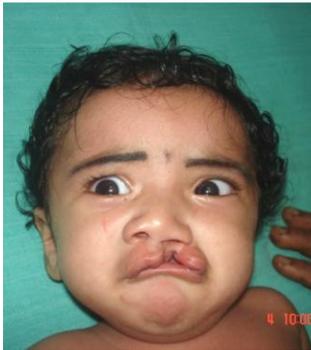


# German Cleft Children's Aid Society (GCCAS) Deutsche Cleft Kinderhilfe e.V.

Travelogue India, January 24 to February 02, 2011  
by Alexander Gross



Freiburg, February 10, 2011

In 2010:  
3.500 surgeries worldwide financed by German Cleft Children's Aid Society; among those 2.240 surgeries in India.

## Introduction

The German Cleft Children's Aid Society is active in India since it was founded in 2002. From 2006 onwards it has been setting up aid facilities in the country together with Prof Krishna Rao. In 2006 Prof Rao brought the GCCAS together with his fellow Dr Shyam Sheth from Ahmedabad, whereupon he in turn founded the "Gujarat Cleft and Craniofacial Research Institute" (The GCCRI). The GCCRI is the supporting organisation of the Cleft Centre Ahmedabad and mainly active in the state of Gujarat. The team organises weekly information camps and has performed close to 2.000 operations since the beginning of its aid activities. Where possible, the affected patients receive extensive post-operative treatment. This includes follow-up operations, orthodontics and speech therapy. The website of the GCCRI and the Cleft Centre Ahmedabad can be found at [www.spreadingsmile.org](http://www.spreadingsmile.org)

One year after the founding of the GCCRI (Cleft Centre Ahmedabad) Prof Rao himself founded the Maaya Foundation as the supporting organisation for the aid of children with cleft lip and palates in the whole of India. Eight centres were gradually established, i.e. in Mangalore (2007), Srinagar, Surat, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai, Vishakhapatnam (2008) and in Patna and Agra (2009). The 4.000<sup>th</sup> operation was performed just recently - at the highest surgical standard and a continuously improving interdisciplinary treatment of the smaller and larger patients alike. Prof Rao is the driving force behind the quality development. Standing by his side is the GCCAS, financing the biannual, up to three-day long workshops in which Prof Rao passes his know-how on to younger surgeons. Our surgeons also attend the annual Indo Cleft Congress meetings. The Maaya Foundation website is [www.maayafoundation.in](http://www.maayafoundation.in)

The occasion for my trip as the CEO of the GCCAS was the attendance of the 10<sup>th</sup> Indo Cleft Congress, held from January 28 to 30, 2011 in Chennai. This was in conjunction with a meeting of all of our surgeons and speech therapists, as speech therapy was just as much in the focus of the congress as the operations themselves. The GCCAS also invited three surgeons and the CEO of our

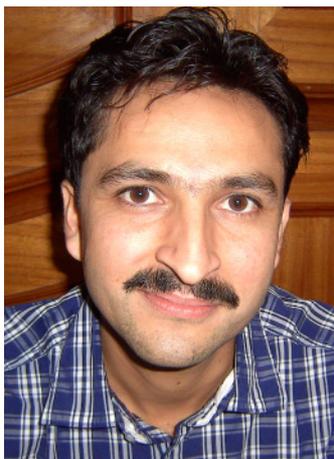
Vietnamese partner association for the aid of children with cleft lip and palate in Vietnam. This invitation proved to be invaluable, as you, dear reader, will see in the excursus on Vietnam.



The (almost) complete team of surgeons from the Maaya Foundation / German Cleft Children's Aid Society during the 10<sup>th</sup> Indo Cleft Congress 2011 in Chennai.

The largest part of this report is given as a message of thanks. This is equally directed at our partners in the project countries as well as our sponsors in Germany and Switzerland. After five years of intensive establishing work we can be proud of what we have achieved. This is, however, in full realisation of the work still ahead of us. Our aim is that the Maaya Foundation and the GCCRI will become financially more independent from the German Cleft Children's Aid Society in order to sustainably conduct their important and highly qualified tasks for poverty stricken children and their families affected by craniofacial anomalies.

**Thank you, Dr. Shyam Sheth and team, Cleft Centre Ahmedabad / Gujarat**



The realisation of more than 150 cleft camps, almost 2.000 cleft operations and post-operative care in many cases speaks for itself. Dr. Shyam has erected a first-class cleft centre in Ahmedabad, receiving great recognition, both at home and abroad, since its founding back in 2006. In this year a promising trial run in rehabilitation will commence when a Dutch foundation will take to the continuing integration of the children operated on by Dr. Shyam. If everything goes well during the first six months the possibility will arise to expand this rehabilitation programme with its school integration to other centres of the German Cleft Children's Aid Society in India. Thank you, Dr. Shyam, for this initiative.

Operations performed in Ahmedabad 2006 to 2010: 2.000

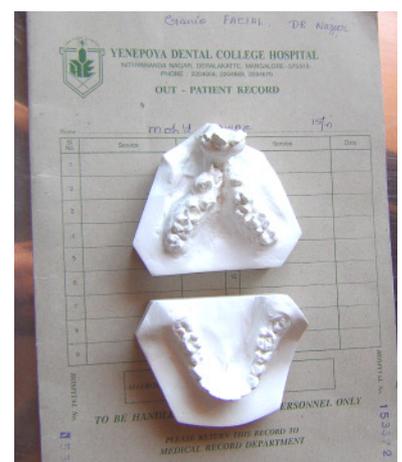
The German Cleft Children's Aid Society has appointed Dr. Shyam as one of its international representatives for the promotion of the projects of the German Cleft Children's Aid Society. We are very much looking forward to an even closer cooperation in the future.

**Thank you to all the members of the Cleft Centre Mangalore / Karnataka with its focus on the treatment of craniofacial anomalies**



Left: Vice-chancellor Prof Dr Chandra Mohan and Alexander Gross in front of the campus of the Yenepoya University. The cleft centre is part of the University.  
Right: Dr Manu Prasad, our youngest and very ambitious surgeon in Mangalore.

In April 2007 the Cleft Centre Mangalore became the first centre to be established under the roof of the Maaya Foundation. Today the Yenepoya Medical School, which recently received recognition as a university, is at the centre of the encouraging development. Prof Krishna Rao teaches at the university and provides the post graduate surgeons with further training. Under the supervision of Prof Rao the Cleft Centre Mangalore, which now has found a new location at the university, will concentrate mainly on the treatment and operation of craniofacial anomalies. Our heartfelt thanks go out to the honourable chancellor of the university, Mr Abdulla Kunhi and the honourable vice-chancellor Prof Dr Chandra Mohan. We would also like to take the opportunity to thank the experienced orthodontist Dr Akhter Husain, who put considerable effort in pushing forward the whole project "Cleft Centre Mangalore at the Yenepoya University". And we are also greatly pleased that a further two excellent surgeons are at hand with Dr Mustafa and the young surgeon Dr. Manu.



Orthodontist Dr Akhter Husain was one of the strong promoters of the Cleft Centre Mangalore. The boy with cleft lip and palate will undergo a 6 month lasting orthodontic treatment before surgery.

Operations performed in Mangalore 4/2007 to 2010 (many of them major surgery): 480

**Thank you, Dr Mohammad Shakeel and team, Cleft Centre Srinagar / Kashmir**

Srinagar was opened as the second Maaya cleft centre under the responsibility of Dr. Mohammad, an experienced student of Prof Rao. The first operations were performed in January 2008. Regrettably, the work of the cleft centre is repeatedly hindered by political unrests, but it is precisely because of this that we are even more pleased that so many patients could be helped in the last three years!

Operations performed 2008 to 2010: 616

**Thank you, Dr Nehal Patel and team, Cleft Centre Surat / Gujarat**

The Cleft Centre Surat exists since February 2008 and is located not too far away from Mumbai. Dr. Nehal is not only a fine surgeon, but also in particular an accomplished organiser. Originally conceived as a small centre, the numbers of children - mostly from rural areas - operated on are enormous. Thank you, Dr. Nehal for the outstanding work!

Operations performed 2/2008 to 2010: 532

**Thank you, Dr Sobhan Mishra, team and Ashakiran, Cleft Centre Bhubaneswar / Orissa**

The symbiosis works fantastically. The Maaya Cleft Centre Bhubaneswar has found an excellent partner for the search, educational work and treatment of patients in India's second poorest state Orissa: the locally well recognised and renowned organisation Ashakiran. Many of our patients are indigenous Adivasi, and have never before been to see a doctor. We are very glad to be able to work for the impoverished population with such great success.

Operations performed 4/2008 to 2010: 822

**Thank you, Dr Siva Reddy and team, Cleft Centre Vishakhapatnam / Andhra Pradesh**

Dr Siva is not only a first-class surgeon but also optimally networked in Vishakhapatnam. Local organisations help him intensively with the educational work and in the search for affected children. The patients are mostly from rural areas and the mountainous regions in the southern part of Orissa. We are very happy that Dr Siva has joined the Maaya Foundation and that he intensively promotes Maaya through his network of contacts.

Operations performed 7/2008 to 2010: 628

**Thank you, Dr Vijay Vikram and team, Cleft Centre Mumbai / Maharashtra**

The founding of the Cleft Centre Mumbai took longer than expected, as the facilities in the new Navnet Hightec Hospital had to be completed first. Dr Vijay attaches great importance to interdisciplinary cooperation. The cleft children he performs surgery on are not only given a check-up by a paediatrician, but also by an ear, nose and throat specialist and are treated accordingly if necessary.

Operations performed 9/2008 to 2010: 340

**Thank you, Dr Umar Shankar, Cleft Centre Patna / Bihar**

The states of Bihar and Orissa are the poorest states in India. In Bihar some 100 million people live in an area of close to 100.000 km<sup>2</sup>. Bihar's capital city Patna is the second largest city in northeast India after Kolkata. Helping cleft children here has been a long-awaited goal. With Dr. Umar we have a very committed director of a centre who still has a lot planned.

Operations performed 10/2008 to 2010: 374

**Thank you, Dr Gaurav Gupta, Cleft Centre Agra / Uttar Pradesh**

The cleft centre in Agra is the most recently opened centre of the Maaya Foundation and located right in the heart of the city. The children Dr. Gaurav performs surgery on are mostly from the rural areas of the very densely populated and predominately agricultural state of Uttar Pradesh. With more than 190 million inhabitants in an area of some 243.000 km<sup>2</sup> Uttar Pradesh belongs to the most densely populated regions of the world.

Operations performed 12/2008 to 2010: 525

**Thank you, Prof Krishna Shama Rao**

The great success in setting up the help for children with cleft lips and palates in India is particularly due to our friend and partner Prof Krishna Shama Rao. He is internationally renowned as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon and has obtained, amongst others, a fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery - FDSRCS (England).

During his career Prof Rao educated hundreds of young maxillofacial surgeons, but only a dozen he chose fellow. Only these fellows and qualified maxillofacial surgeons are directors of the Maaya Cleft Centres.

Prof. Rao (left) together with Dr Siva Reddy at the Chennai Conference.

## The future

### Thank you, Mr Dushyant R. Prasad, first CEO of the Maaya Foundation



It is only seven months since Dushyant Prasad came to the position as the first CEO of the Maaya Foundation, and in this time he has achieved an extraordinary amount of things. But success is necessary as there is no way around the continuing development of aid supplied to the poor and affected people of India by the Maaya Foundation. The budgeting for 2011 (see below) calls for an increased efficiency in regard to quantity and quality of the treatments which will not be achieved without an intensification of fundraising in Germany, but also in India itself. As a graduate of a renowned business school in Mysore, India, Dushyant Prasad is - in spite of his young age - well prepared for the task. He is highly motivated, determined, willing to perform and shows excellent organisational skills. We are grateful to have him on the team.

### Maaya Foundation: Budgeting 2011 (figures: 2. February 2011)

We want to grow and be able to treat more children as well as continue to increase the quality of our centres. This is the basis of our budgeting for 2011, devised by Dushyant Prasad and Alexander Gross and approved by the Board of Trustees of the Maaya Foundation and the Foundation Board of the German Cleft Children's Aid Society. The planning shows a hole in the budget which has to be closed by summer 2011. The planning of the revenues and expenditures is as follows:

#### Revenues 2011

	<u>in Euro</u>
Secured yields from donations German Cleft Children's Aid Society	300.000
Necessary yields from donations German Cleft Children's Aid Society	100.000
Necessary yields from donations Maaya Foundation / India	70.000
Further yields from donations (special yields not yet foreseeable)	<u>80.000</u>
<b>Sum total</b>	<b>550.000</b>

#### Expenditures 2011

	<u>Operations</u>	<u>in Euro*</u>
Central coordination and development of speech therapy		6.316
Maaya Centre Mangalore (craniofacial anomalies)	286	82.421
Maaya Centre Srinagar / Kashmir	242	53.281
Maaya Centre Surat / Gujarat	264	53.333
Maaya Centre Bhubaneswar / Orissa	264	57.649
Maaya Centre Vishakhapatnam / Andhra Pradesh	264	52.702
Maaya Centre Mumbai / Maharashtra	220	52.263
Maaya Centre Patna / Bihar	264	53.860
Maaya Centre Agra / Uttar Pradesh	<u>242</u>	53.165
Education and further training of surgeons / therapists		36.000
General expenses Maaya Foundation Bangalore		<u>48.421</u>
<b>Sum total</b>	<b>2.046</b>	<b>549.411</b>

\*apart from the expenses for surgery the expenditures include the costs of educational work, orthodontics and speech therapy. Excluded are the expenses for our cleft centre in Ahmedabad. This centre is currently mostly independent, as the Indian foundation of a German company is currently bearing these expenses. We are very, very grateful for this!

## **Founding of a surgical quality circle for the worldwide projects of the German Cleft Children's Aid Society**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Indo Cleft Congress in Chennai gave the German Cleft Children's Aid Society the opportunity to implement the next step in quality development and quality assurance. The German Cleft Children's Aid Society launched an international quality circle for the development and qualitative check of the projects of the German Cleft Children's Aid Society.

Henceforth five to seven members will belong to the "board". All members are very experienced in the treatment of children with cleft lip and palates and represent the setting up of interdisciplinary cleft centres. The founding members are:

Prof. Krishna Shama Rao, Yenepoya University Mangalore / India  
PD Dr. Dr. Katja Schwenzer-Zimmerer, Universität Basel / Switzerland  
Dr. Chetana Kumar, Bangalore / India  
Dr. Alberto Bardales, Lima / Peru



We are pleased to have the Tübinger maxillo-facial surgeon PD Dr Dr Katja Schwenzer-Zimmerer as European member of the board.

A place is reserved for a Vietnamese surgeon from our partner OSCA in Hanoi. The international quality circle supplements the work of the board of trustees of the German Cleft Children's Aid Society.

### **Excursus: Participation of representatives from our Vietnamese partners OSCA in Chennai**



From left side: Alexander Gross, Dr Ai, OSCA CEO Mrs. Tu Anh Bui, Dr Hoai, Dr Hung and Maaya CEO Mr. Dushyant Prasad

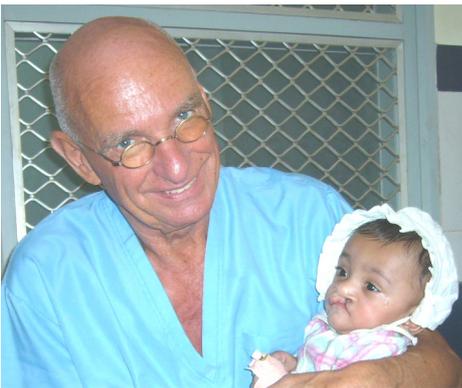
The invitation of members of the German partners for the help for cleft children in Vietnam OSCA was in many ways a successful measure.

Apart from the lectures on surgical techniques and experiences, speech therapy and the relationship between surgeon and speech therapist was at the centre of the debate. In Vietnam the speech-therapeutic care of children with cleft lip and palates is still unknown territory. Our Vietnamese partners therefore for the first time became aware of the importance of this therapy and the fact of how vital a close cooperation and feedback between speech therapists and surgeons is! An apparently well-operated palate does not automatically mean that the functionality of the mouth motor functions and speech are given in such a manner as the speech therapist can expect it to be, and as could be at an optimum for the patient. As a conclusion of the congress the invited Vietnamese colleagues then stated that they from now on would take into account the effects of their surgical activities on the mouth motor functions and the articulation and language development!

A further key experience was the realisation that many countries were considerably ahead of Vietnam regarding the founding of interdisciplinary cleft centres. The founding of the first centre by OSCA is now an important objective as is the holding of the first Vietnamese congress for children with cleft lip and palates and craniofacial anomalies, just like India began their holding of the first congress on these clefts ten years ago. Our Vietnamese friends dolefully recapitulated the results of twenty years of surgical activities by mainly foreign groups. A large number of patients were - and still are - aided by the operation, but an effective home-grown domestic aid is still not available - even after twenty years of foreign aid. OSCA and the German Cleft Children's Aid Society are determined to change this together.

### **Thank you to Dr Dr Heinz Luebbe and to all donors and supporters of our work**

My special thanks go to board member Dr Dr Heinz Luebbe, to all our involved surgeons and therapists and to all our donors and supporters. Unfortunately Heinz Luebbe could not attend the congress. Now all team members in India und Vietnam send him their kindest regards. Also they greet all supporters in Germany, who are committed as volunteers and those, who provide financial aid. In India, in Vietnam and also in Germany we are aware of a responsible use of these donations.



Prof Dr Dr Heinz Luebbe  
Honorary Professor University Bangalore /  
India

Since 2004 responsible for setting up our sus-  
tainable projects  
Thank you!

Freiburg 10th February 2011  
German Cleft Children's Aid Society  
Alexander Gross