

MARTINA MERTEN

health specialist

Name: Martina Merten

Date of Birth: 27 December 1976

Nationality: German

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Expertise

- **Strong experience in the health sector for 18 years**
- Excellent knowledge of global development topics
- Broad experience in the field of international development organizations with a focus on global health
- Completion of various assignments related to global health communication, behavior change communication, health system financing, reproductive health, health systems in transition, health system strengthening and the burden of disease in LMICs.
- On the ground research in 20 different countries, among others Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, China, Middle- and Eastern Europe; U.S.A.
- Excellent writing skills: Publication of numerous articles and background papers about foreign health care systems and their respective challenges
- Recipient of various awards, grants and fellowships – triple of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Years of university instruction on global and international health sciences

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Education

- Masters in Political Science. Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University, Bonn. Cum laude, 2002.
- Professional on the job traineeship on health journalism, Journal of the German Medical Association, Cologne, 2002-2004.

In Country Experience

Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, India, Latvia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Philippines, Thailand, Ukraine, Vietnam, United States of America.

Selected Projects with a global health focus (2015-2020)

1. **Name of assignment or project:** Traumata caused by Online Child Sexual Exploitation in the Philippines/**PHILIPPINES**;
Year: October 2019 to April 2020
Client: European Journalism Center, Netherlands; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, U.S.A.
Position held: Researcher, Healthcare journalist
- Background of the project: Webcam Child Sex Tourism (WCST) is a growing, relatively new crime. Highest numbers of cases have been found in the Philippines, Cambodia and Indonesia - most likely because of these countries cheap and easy access to the internet, even for the many poor ones. According to the Walk Free's Foundation "Global Slavery Index" one in 130 persons are estimated to be trapped in WCST in the Philippines. Reports of online child sex exploitation have been increasing from year to year, says the International Justice Mission (IJM) of the Southeast-ASEAN country. Cybersex abusers tend to recruit the children age 1 to 12 through existing relationships - through the parents of the child, their siblings or relatives. Poverty stays the main trigger for committing such a horrible crime. In

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the Philippines according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) nearly 25 percent of the population lives below the poverty line - meaning are living on less than 2 USD per day.

- Main project features: Identification of the scope of traumata victims of Online Child sexual Exploitation are suffering from; Analysis of rehabilitation approaches being undertaken by public and private stakeholders.
- Activities performed:
 - Conducted interviews with national and international stakeholders on Online Child Sexual Exploitation and health related issues of victims
 - Reviewed relevant literature on OSEC
 - Published articles in peer reviewed journals
- 2. **Name of assignment or project:** Designing and Initiating a Behavior Change Communication Campaign on preventing disabilities through intermarriages /**GERMANY; PAKISTAN;**
Year: August to November 2019
Client: Management4Health; in cooperation with Aga Khan University, Karachi, and CHIP, Islamabad
Position held: Behavior Change Communication Expert; Health Expert
- Background of the project: Latest studies have shown that the high level of intermarriages within Pakistani communities has doubled the risk of birth defects, so children born out of consanguinity are twice as likely to contract genetic hazards as those who are not. Despite that the majority of families in rural Pakistan continues inter-family marriages, because of tradition, cultural norms and restrictions.
- Main project features: Initiated and organized a workshop on designing a health campaign with a focus on preventing intermarriages in Pakistan; promoted the application for the 24th round of the Grand Challenge Initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and for the Global Health Hub Challenge/Germany.
- Activities performed:
 - Worked as health system expert and communication expert to organize and prepare a BCC workshop in Lahore
 - Conducted the workshop

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- Promoted the application for two global health challenges
3. **Name of assignment or project:** Polio legacy and transition in Nigeria **/NIGERIA;**
Year: February to July 2019
Client: Rotary International in cooperation with UNICEF Nigeria
Position held: communication expert; health expert
- **Background of the project:** Poliomyelitis – one of the world’s formerly most dangerous virus – has been eradicated in most countries of the world. Nigeria is on the brink of one of its greatest public health achievements – eradication wild polio virus; international donor organization (GPEI) and the Nigerian government are actively working on transition plans for one the world’s most efficient immunization networks.
 - **Main project features:** Identification of transition plans including the CHIPS program of the Nigerian government; identification of the role of voluntary community mobilisers for RI, polio eradication and other infectious vaccine preventable diseases; identification of the role of GIS systems for immunization and surveillance; identification of remaining challenges to Polio Transition Planning in Nigeria.
 - **Activities performed:**
 - Worked as health system expert and communication expert to monitor the local situation
 - conducted interviews with representatives of WHO, UNICEF, Rotary, the National Emergency Operation Center, National Primary Health Care Development Agency, CDC Nigeria
 - analyzed the role of traditional and religious leaders for behavior change communication and community mobilization
 - analyzed the role of (female) voluntary community mobilisers for immunization activities
 - published a final paper on polio transition activities and community mobilization efforts and its challenges in Nigeria
4. **Name of assignment or project:** Advisory support in the topic of care for a learning video and a working group in Ukraine/support of the Infrastructure Programme for Ukraine (IIPU) **/UKRAINE**

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Year: from October 2018 to January 2019

Client: German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), Eschborn/Germany

Position held: Health System Expert

- **Background of the project:** The German Government launched the Initiative of the Infrastructure Programme for Ukraine (IIPU) in 2015. This programme supports towns and cities as well as municipalities in the eastern part of Ukraine dealing with the consequences of this conflict. Among other things GIZ is working to make public institutions in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhya operational and able to provide better services to the population. Among such public institutions are care facilities which encompass an urgent need of trained personal and basic knowledge about various levels of care.
- **Main project features:** A learning/teaching video is designed and produced for care provision for bedridden patients. The content of the learning video is basic and easy to consume. The identification of the necessary content for the video takes place in close dialogue with Ukraine care experts who are part of a working group.
- **Activities performed:**
 - Identified the necessary content for the video consequences in cooperation with the working group.
 - Went on missions to the Ukraine to visit care facilities and do analysis on the ground.
 - Conducted interviews with care takers within those care facilities to learn about their daily needs and stressors.
 - Transferred the findings of the mission and a short desk study into a care manual which includes international perspectives on quality standards for care facilities.
 - Adjusted the care manual to the findings of the working group and added more content if necessary
 - Helped with the video script and production process of the video

5. **Name of assignment or project:** Analysis of the genetic effects of consanguinity /**PAKISTAN**

Year: from August 2018 to February 2019

Client: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation/US in cooperation with the European Center for Journalism/Netherlands

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Position held: Global Health Expert

- **Background of the project:** Latest studies have shown that the high level of intermarriages within Pakistani communities has doubled the risk of birth defects, so children born out of consanguinity are twice as likely to contract genetic hazards as those who are not. Despite that the majority of families in rural Pakistan continues inter-family marriages, because of tradition, cultural norms and restrictions.
 - **Main project features:** The study aims to analyze the prevalence of consanguinity, the reasons for it and possible ways for early detection of genetic risks.
 - **Activities performed:** Analyzed reasons for cousin marriages in Pakistan and worldwide, conducted interviews with medical experts, anthropologists, scientists and patients on the ground being disabled and born out of consanguinity. Published articles on the topic (Sueddeutsche Zeitung, German Medical Journal, DW Online, British Medical Journal)
6. **Name of assignment or project:** Health Sector Assessment of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/**PAKISTAN**
- Year:** from October 2017 to June 2018
- Client:** Asian Development Bank (ADB), Manila/Philippines
- Position held:** Behavior Change Communication Expert
- **Background of the project:** Behavior Change Communication (BCC) should be an integral part of every approach to improve a health system, especially in developing countries and emerging nations. Communication is considered to be a key element in changing behaviors. One of Pakistan's main challenges is the poor outcomes for Mother and Child Health (MNCH), which are even poorer in KP. The Maternal Mortality Ratio in the province is 206/100000 (178/100.000 in Pakistan), only 48 percent of deliveries take place in the presence of a skilled birth attendant (52 percent in Pakistan) and 60 percent receive ANC from a skilled birth provider (73 percent in Pakistan). Therefore implementing efficient BCC strategies for MNCH to improve the behavior of mothers, their family and of health care providers is an important step into the right direction.
 - **Main project features:** The assessment focused on secondary care facilities since most BCC activities have been focusing on primary care interventions. It aims to analyze if any BCC

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efforts have been made on secondary level so far and if not, which steps could be undertaken to implement a successful BCC strategy for secondary care facilities.

- Activities performed: Analyzed the situation of MNCH in KP with a focus on health seeking behavior of mothers and their families. Identified BCC challenges on demand side, supply side and cross cutting level. Drafted of a BCC strategy for secondary care interventions for KP. Methods used: literature review on MNCH and BCC in Pakistan and in KP. Conducted interviews with important stakeholders (DOH, JICA, UNICEF, WHO, Health Service Academy, PIDE, NIPS, LHWP, et al) in Islamabad and Peshawar. Conducted a workshop with the government of KP in Peshawar around BCC.
7. **Name of assignment or project**: Analysis of the effect of aging populations on the healthcare system of India/**INDIA**
- Year**: from June 2017 to February 2018
- Client**: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation/US in cooperation with the European Center for Journalism/Netherlands
- Position held**: Global Health Expert
- Background of the project: According to the United Nations Population Division India's population age 60 and older is projected to increase from 8 percent in 2010 to 19 percent (323 million people) in 2050, according. Age related, foremost chronic diseases are on the rise. Already about four million people are diagnosed with forms of dementia. Facilities which take care of the elderly are lacking all over the country. Those, which exist, are very costly and only available to a few.
 - Main project features: The study aims to look at the Indian healthcare sector for the elderly (with focus on dementia care) and evaluate the supply gaps in this sector.
 - Activities performed: Analyzed the healthcare supply for the elderly in India – with focus on both the private and the public supply; reviewed literature on elderly care in India; conducted interviews with important stakeholders in the sector (DOH, NGOs like HelpAgeIndia, academia, health professionals); published articles on the topic (German Medical Journal, DW Online, British Medical Journal)
8. **Name of assignment or project**: Analysis of the reproductive health sector/Philippines;

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Client: Karl-Kuebel Foundation/Germany; Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines, Goethe Institute, **PHILIPPINES**

Year: from March 2017 to present

Position held: Communication Expert

- **Background of the project:** One in four pregnancies in the Philippines has been unwanted. Two out of three Filipinas are not using any form of birth control. To improve the situation the so called reproductive health law was passed in 2012, which guarantees access to contraceptives for all citizens, mandates reproductive health education in government schools and recognizes women's rights to post-abortion care. Full implementation of the law hasn't been achieved yet.
 - **Main project features:** Identification of reasons why reproductive health in the Philippines according to WHO "has been lacking behind in Southeast Asia". The study aims to identify reasons for this situation and tries to come up with behavior changes with focus on women in the Philippines.
 - **Activities performed:** Conducted literature review on reproductive health in the Philippines, conducted interviews with governmental representatives (DOH, DSWD) on reproductive health and social welfare, conducted interviews with representatives of the non-governmental sector, academia and women in difficult life situations, Worked as communication expert to create awareness of the reproductive health situation in the Philippines with the help of publications and exhibitions in the Philippines and Germany.
9. **Name of assignment or project:** Analysis of control mechanisms of infectious diseases (polio) in Pakistan/**PAKISTAN**;
- Year:** September to November 2016
- Client:** Rotary International/Switzerland in cooperation with Rotary International, WHO and UNICEF/Pakistan
- Position held:** health system expert; communication expert
- **Background of the project:** Poliomyelitis – one of the world's formerly most dangerous virus – has been eradicated in most countries of the world. The world is on the brink of one of its greatest public health achievements. Pakistan, however, is still affected. One reason is the

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low immunization coverage in some provinces. With the help of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI, a partnership between WHO, CDC, UNICEF, Rotary International and the affected countries) the government tries to eradicate the last percent.

- Main project features: Identification of how the initiative manages to get the country polio-free, study on what challenges the GPEI in Pakistan is facing, identification of the problems of routine immunization (RI) in Pakistan.
 - Activities performed: Worked as health system expert and healthcare journalist to monitor the local situation, conducted interviews with representatives of WHO, UNICEF and Rotary International, conducted interviews with government representatives (Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordinations), accompanied local female vaccinators in Sindh, developed a final paper on the countries situation of polio eradication.
10. **Name of assignment or project**: Analysis of the polio eradication initiative in India/**INDIA**;
Year: from September to November 2015
Client: Rotary International/Switzerland in cooperation with Rotary International, WHO and UNICEF/India
Position held: health system expert/communication expert
- Background of the project: India was able to eradicate Poliomyelitis – one of the world's formerly most dangerous viruses. The second largest country of the world was declared polio-free in 2014. However, it took the country nearly 30 years to overcome the challenge, even though the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI, a partnership between WHO, CDC, UNICEF, Rotary International and the affected countries) worked hard. Up to now national and sub-national immunization days are conducted to face the ongoing risk that the virus can come back.
 - Main project features: Identification of how the GPEI in India manages to keep the country polio-free, study on what challenges India faced in overcoming different behavior patterns.
 - Activities performed: Worked as communication expert and healthcare journalist to monitor the local situation, conducted interviews with representatives of WHO, UNICEF and Rotary International, accompanied vaccination teams doing house to house immunization in Uttar Pradesh, developed a final paper on the countries situation of polio eradication.

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Other health related Projects

1. June 2014: The fear of socialized Medicine in the United States of America. Research Grant. **U.S.A.** American Council on Germany, U.S.A. position held: healthcare journalist, researcher.
2. Autumn 2013: The rise of non-communicable diseases in developing countries and emerging nations. Research Grant. **INDIA.** Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, U.S.A.; position held: healthcare journalist, researcher.
3. October 2011: The effects of Obamacare on the Medicare Program. Research Grant. **U.S.A.** International Journalist's Program, Germany; position held: healthcare journalist, researcher.
4. January-April 2011: Analysis and evaluation of the health insurance system of the poor (RSBY), **INDIA.** German Corporation on International Cooperation, Germany; position held: consultant, communication expert.
5. April-Mai 2010: Analysis of the strengthening of provincial health systems, **VIETNAM.** German Corporation on International Cooperation, Germany; position held: communication expert, researcher.
6. From October to December 2009: The Medical Tourism Industry in Southeast Asia with focus on the Philippines. Research grant. **PHILIPPINES.** Heinz-Kuehn-Foundation, Germany; position held: healthcare journalist, researcher.
7. From October to December 2008: the transition of the Vietnamese Healthcare system. Research grant. **VIETNAM.** International Journalist's Program (IJP), Germany; position held: healthcare journalist, researcher.
8. November 2005: Climate Change and Health. Research Grant. **CHINA.** Journalist's network, Germany; position held: healthcare journalist.

Health related Academia

1. Since 2018: University instruction
Client: University of Applied Sciences Fulda
Position held: instructor on global health

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Target group: German and international global health bachelor students

2. Since 2015: University instruction

Client: CIEE Global Institute, Berlin

Position held: lead instructor on global health; instructor on healthcare systems in comparison

Target group: US bachelor students of all subjects

3. Since 2013: University instruction

Client: Charité University Hospital

Position held: instructor on global health

Target group: German and international medical students and post graduates

4. 2015: University Instruction

Client: University of Applied Sciences (Neu Ulm), Fresenius

Position held: instructor on healthcare management in developing countries

Target group: German bachelor students of health sciences

5. From 2013-2015: University instruction

Client: University of Applied Sciences (Idstein)

Position held: instructor on healthcare management and global health studies

Target group: African and Asian pharmacists, Master's program

6. 2009: University instruction

Client: Asian Center for Journalism at the Ateneo de Manila University (Manila)

Position held: instructor on health journalism

Target group: journalists from all over Asia, Master's program

Employment Record

- *2005-2009: Social and Health Editor/Journal of the German Medical Association-German Medical Journal (Deutsches Ärzteblatt), Berlin*

Responsible for conducting research on the German and international healthcare systems; attending press conferences and meeting with health experts from Germany and abroad, creating and participating in networks of German and international health

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experts, going on research trips to meet with international health experts and to analyze the situation of various countries abroad, editing of guest contributions

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