



Misioneros de la
Preciosa Sangre

Health for All

Project of equipment of the Health Care Station in the town of Bissaquel
(Safim, Guinea - Bissau).

Introduction

It should be noted that today poverty, malnutrition, chronic diseases that plague **Guinea - Bissau**, are linked to the constant instability of the political situation in the country. It is extremely painful for the population in general, especially for those who live in **small towns where there are no social infrastructures** (schools, institutes, ambulatory, roads, drinking water, electric power, etc.).

History

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood arrived in the village of **Bissaquel** in October 2004, settling in the new house of formation that they made to form future Guinean missionaries and priests.

In these years Bissaquel was a small town that **had absolutely no public services** (schools, ambulatory, potable water, electric power, etc.). There were only the Franciscan sisters, who have a school; on the part of the government there was nothing and still there is nothing. In the health area there is nothing, people had to walk 5 km to get to a military hospital available for the air forces of the army, in Bissalanca.

The missionaries perceived all this, the needs that were in the village: how they live, what kind of health care there is, the situation of the children in hygiene, food care, body care, wounds etc. They came to the conclusion that **most people did not have minimal knowledge about health care.**

They began to create bonds of friendship with the people who live in the town. At this point, the town was only inhabited mostly by "papeis", one of the ethnic groups of Guinea - Bissau. Throughout this observation attentive to know the reality of the people, their way of living and seeing reality.

The missionaries and seminarians realized that there **was no health service nearby, there were many malnourished children, malaria**, intestinal problems due to the type of water they use for drinking, diarrhea, skin diseases, people with open wounds and not healed, pains in the eyes...

The missionaries took the initiative to support the people, to go to meet them. As one of them was a nurse during military service and at home there were medicines and materials to do healing - first aid kit, **they began to cure people in the shade of a cashew tree**, the tree that produces the cashew nut. At first there were few, they cured once and never returned, or they returned after a week with the bandage removed or dirty. For them it was not easy because many had to go to work in the fields, in the rice cultivation in the "bolanha" (rice field) with that wound and put their foot in the water all day.

After the time more people began to come because when one was well healed he warned those who lived in other neighboring towns telling them that in the house of the priests (seminary) they healed. **With time the curative happened as commission of the seminarians**; since they were not sick, the medications were given according to what was written in the prescription, or if the wound was too infected, the person was instructed to do a first healing in the hospital to see the severity of the wound, a medical consultation, and then they continued with the treatment. In the event that the person has no money or the injury is not serious, they assumed the responsibility to cure it directly.

Two seminarians participated in a Caritas formation, in a project for children called "Pastoral de las Crianças" (pastoral of children). There **they learned the basic first aid and treatment**.

Throughout the years more and more people came to do healing. They were not only those of Bissaquel, but also those of neighboring towns. By day they were 20 people. They were quite infected wounds, which if prolonged in time could cause the need to amputate the foot. The wounds were infected by lack of care and on the other hand there was no way to treat it.

The project, today

The Missionaries, the local population and people of good will **seek together the solution to reduce this problem**, a consequence of the misery that befalls the poorest population. The project is part of this line of wanting to help the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, interested in the reality of this village in the district of Safim (Bissaquel) in responding to the needs they present. In this way, the Missionaries are supported by the NGO CopaMater, which donated money for the construction of a small health post on a missionary site for social purposes. This fact motivated us to elaborate **the project of construction of a Health Care Post (PAS)** to support families with needs.

The **needs** of the Health Care Station are the following:

- Surgical and health material
- Operating room equipment and medical attention rooms.
- Medicines
- Furnishing
- Complete infrastructure and supplies to give the proper health attention.

The objective of this initiative, on one hand, has to do with **the immense difficulty of access to health**, the care of many families and, on the other hand, discourage the practice of traditional medicine and sensitize the population about the importance of health in the life of the human being.

This initiative is designed to respond to the Cries of the Blood, of the most needy. To this we feel called to respond to this question of the gospel: *"Who is my neighbour?"*.