

SENEGAL REGION

Senegal, located on the West coast of Africa, is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau.

STATISTICS:

Population – 12.8 million

Religions - Islam: 94%; Christian (mainly Catholic): 4.9%; in country areas, still a strong influence of Traditional Religion.

Languages - French (official language) and Wolof; There are at least nine other officially recognized national languages.

Literacy – 59.1% (significantly less for women).



RNDM IN SENEGAL

History of RNDM presence in Senegal

Senegal region was founded by the province of France in September 1971. The first three sisters arrived in Mboro, a town near the coast to the north of Dakar. Marie Laurent from Switzerland, Myriam from Ireland and Marie Elizabeth, originally from Vietnam, came in response to the need expressed by the small Catholic community, many of whom had come to find work in the phosphate mine of Taiba. Within the first few months they had opened a dispensary and a kindergarten and were involved in the catechetical programme of the parish. The following year Sr. Marie Odile joined the community and plans were underway to start a primary school.



Marie Laurent, Myriam, Elizabeth



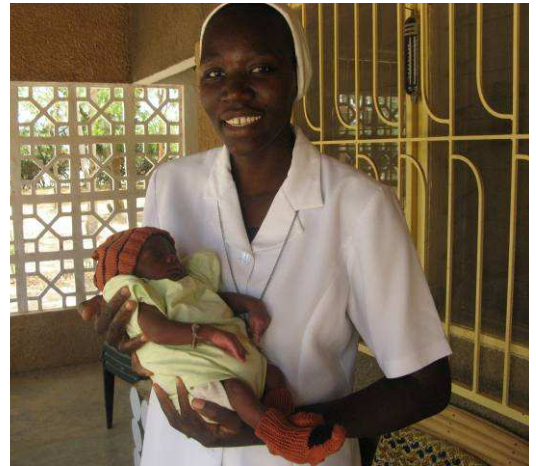
Back (left to right): Veronica Dunne, Sandra Stewart, Patricia Boyd; front: Marie Elizabeth

The mission continued to develop and in 1984 a second community was opened in the village of Ndondol, 100 km from Mboro. The first sisters were: Patricia Boyd from New Zealand, Veronica Dunne from Canada and M. Elizabeth.

The Sisters living and working in Senegal have been from: Australia, France, Peru, India, New Zealand, Kenya, Vietnam and Philippines. Our first Senegalese Sister made her novitiate in Kenya and has been professed in Senegal in 2007 and is working in her own country. Since the year 2000 we started to welcome some young Sisters who had made their first commitment in their own country, and for whom it is now time to experience an international mission in preparation for their act of final profession.



RNDMs present in the region



Marie Rose, our first Senegalese sister

SENEGAL RNDM logo: the calabash



To express what presence in Mission is for us RNDM in Senegal, what better symbol can we find than the "calabash" – a practical and beautiful vessel.

Calabash:
Fruit of the earth
Gift of the rain
Ripened by the sun

Emptied to receive all, to resonate with the rhythms of celebration
The **calabash** is present in the life of the Senegalese people from birth until death ... in all the ceremonies of life. It is also simply there every day, for the life of each day. The calabash is open to receive, to listen; it is ready to pour out freely as gift all that it has received. A calabash circles in communion and has the depths of prayer. May we be calabashes for the people we have been missioned to here in Senegal.

MISSION ACTIVITIES

Health:

Dispensary; Mother/child health care groups; Nutritional program; Vaccination program; Children with disabilities, Formation of health workers; Health education and animation in villages and schools.

RNDM Dispensary, Mboro

Our dispensary at Mboro, founded in 1971, is the focus and base for a health care programme serving people in the numerous villages scattered throughout the Rural Community of Mboro and often beyond this. With a team of 9 Senegalese - of whom one is the Chief Nurse - and one Sister, the dispensary offers curative services as well as an important laboratory service, a weekly ante-natal clinic, various preventive programmes [vaccinations, hygiene, nutrition] in outlying villages, and education/information programmes concentrating on Aids, sexually-transmitted diseases, tuberculosis and malaria prevention.



The people start arriving at the dispensary from early in the morning, having walked in the cool of the pre-dawn to wait patiently for their turn. There will be anything from 150 to 250 patients each morning, depending on the time of the year. All types of care are provided – maternity, accident and emergency, infections, dressings. The dispensary has a 4WD vehicle to take the staff around to the villages for vaccinations and other health programmes, and to take serious cases on the two-hour drive to the nearest hospital. The dispensary has its own laboratory and can do all the basic analysis work. Testing for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis

and for diabetes is increasingly important as a service for the whole region.

The Mother –Child Health and Nutrition Programme, in Ndondol

continues to help in the improvement of nutrition levels. Madame Philomene Dione works with fifteen groups of mothers with infants aged 0-30 months (total – some 500 women). At the monthly session with each group the babies are weighed and Philomene presents and discusses with the women a specific health topic. Sometimes she demonstrates the cooking of a meal for the children. Children identified at the weighing session as being malnourished are brought to the Centre each week; here the mothers receive further advice and a small quantity of enriched food, vitamins etc. The women make a small financial contribution for each session – their families often have little or no cash income. At the village level the groups of women are more and more capable of carrying out monthly weighing, keeping the necessary



Philomène working with women

records and distributing the enriched flour. A programme for village hygiene supporting local “clean-up” committees in about 12 different village sectors, involves the regular visits of one young man who has assisted the sisters for a number of years.

Community Health Insurance Scheme started in 2002, now covers about 180 families, a total of over 1000 persons. This scheme is based on practical collaboration at grassroots level, without distinction of religion or ethnicity, and its day-to-day running is assured by the work of volunteers.

Children with disabilities:

Among the severely malnourished infants who have come to the weekly session at the mother-Child health center, we met increasing numbers of children disabled from birth, and in some cases severely handicapped. Since 2007, with the financial support of the Liliane Foundation (Netherlands), some other donors, and the practical assistance of the “Centre de Réadaptation” situated at 25km from Ndongol, we are able to give some help to about 30 children and their families



Margaret Spain with Dienaba Faye and our friends from Liliane Foundation

PROJECTS

Soap Making

In recent statistics we have noted that more than 80% of sicknesses are due to lack of hygiene and around 30 – 40% of sick people who come to us suffer from skin diseases. We have found an easy way of healing some of these skin diseases with the use of plant products (including Neem tree leaves and Aloe Vera); we use them in the



preparation of soap. We also made easily available the soap for washing clothes.

We have already tested these soaps in our clinic and we have good results. After the first experiment there are many requests coming in for these antiseptic soaps. We are happy to teach the women how to, prepare these soaps. So far two groups of women have been trained, but they need more guidance to become independent. We have other women who are interested in preparation of these soaps, and we would like to make the soap available in all villages around us. This will be one of the activities women can carry on using their micro-credit funds.

Economical cookers:

Among many development activities an economical cooking stove is one of our projects. Yes indeed the women are eager to have one to ease their work. It is a tremendous joy for us to work in this project and we thank all the people who have helped us to realise it, especially KinderMissionsWerk, an NGO from Germany. The women who use this stove will be able to tell us how much they gain. They don't



consume a lot of wood, the meals are cooked within a short time, women are able to find some charcoal to make tea, and with the hot sand they can fry peanuts..... When we started thinking of this project we thought of lessening the work of women who go for kilometres to find firewood, save trees, we also wanted girls to have more time to study, to lessen the fire accidents and so on. In women's own words "they can save at least 10-15 trees in a year!"

Water Projects

In recent years, with the generous help of many groups of friends, especially Carien Roselaars-Pluimers (in Netherlands) we have been able to ensure provision of safe drinking water to several villages near Ndondol.



Education:

Literacy classes in local languages continue for some women's groups.



We support the Government High School in Ndondol through the Library which provides invaluable resources and now also several computers to enable basic training. Most families in Ndondol area have no books at all in the home. The library has significantly helped improve the rate of success of many students who have progressed to higher education.

Parish Programmes and Activities:

In both Mboro and Ndondol we continue to assist the Catholic communities through support for catechists, catechetical and sacramental programmes and youth organizations.

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