

Senegal



The Republic of Senegal is located on the west coast of Africa. Its name comes from the Senegal River which borders it on the east and north. It covers an area that is just a bit larger than the size of all of New England and its population is roughly the same as well. The capital city is Dakar.



Sisters provide health care at a rural clinic.

Most people who live in Senegal are Muslim (about 94%); the 5% who are Christian are mostly of Roman Catholic and some Protestant

denominations. The Christian faith was introduced by missionaries in the late 19th century. At present, most Catholics live near the coastal areas or in far eastern Senegal. Many foreign nationals who now call Senegal home have also brought their Christian faith with them from Lebanon, Cape Verde, various European countries, and even the United States.

Although education is free and compulsory in Senegal, even the government agrees that there is no way to enforce the laws; many children, especially girls, do not go to school as the number of schools cannot accommodate the number of children who must enroll. The illiteracy rate is high – only about four in ten people in Senegal know how to read and write.

Health care is also a problem for the average Senegalese. There are about six doctors for every 100,000 people in the country. Malaria remains a huge problem, although recently infant malarial mortality rates are dropping. Twenty percent of children under five years old are underweight.

MCA in Senegal

While most people in the city (about 75%) have access to indoor plumbing and running water, many people who live in the rural areas do not. Because the children have to drink dirty water, they are exposed to many water borne diseases. When they become ill, there is little medical care.

“You can’t imagine my joy in knowing that you are ready to help me care for all these children in need,” wrote one missionary Sister in a letter to the Missionary Childhood Association. “The children too are most grateful to all those who pray and sacrifice for them.”

Sister Rosalind works in a Church funded community center in a small village in Thies, Senegal –a place she describes as “in the middle of nowhere – with no roads but many paths.” During the rainy season, the roads become pitted with deep holes which make walking or driving extremely dangerous.

At that center, there are two medical clinics, a support program for women and children, and day care for the youngest in the village.

Through the program for women and children, new mothers receive instruction about how to care for their newborns. These babies are carefully monitored to ensure that they do not become malnourished. The

Sisters also distribute vitamins and milk to those in need.

At the medical clinic, adults and children are treated for illnesses ranging from malaria to diabetes to leprosy.

Children in day care are not only taught how to read, write and speak French, but also learn about the “Good News” of Jesus. They come to share and care for one another – just as Jesus loved us; they also pray and sing hymns. Above all, they learn of the reason for all our hope – Jesus Himself – and their joy, like ours, is abundant!



Sister Rosalind at work in the MCA funded day care

Last year, members of the Missionary Childhood Association from around the world sacrificed \$32,678.65 to be sent to help the children of the Diocese of Thies where Sr. Rosalind works. Schools, clinics, feeding programs, and day care centers received assistance.