

Human Interest Story Huambo

Primary School Missionary Theresianas Sisters, Canhe, Huambo, 3-5 November 2014.

The Missionary Primary School of the Sisters of Tereseia in Canhe, Huambo, was one of the 849 schools that participated at the treatment campaign of Praziquantel, in the province of Huambo, end of October/early November 2014.

Two months before the campaign, 62 children have fainted at school for unknown reasons. This event has been monitored by the staff of the nearby health facility but no cause for this the fainting has been found. This preceding event however, made the parents and teachers reluctant to let the children participate at the Praziquantel treatment campaign. Through the training and sensibilisation campaign, the teachers and parents were aware of possible side-effects of taking Praziquantel and at the first day of the treatment campaign, they didn't allow the children to take the drugs.

A joint team of MENTOR and DPS staff was sent to Canhe on the 3rd of November, where they organized a meeting with the parents and the teachers of the concerned children. The MENTOR/DPS team explained how important it is that all children participate at the treatment campaign, which is also prevention against schistosomiasis infection. When the parents and teachers realized that schistosomiasis infection can cause severe health problems, including delayed cognitive development and thus limited learning capacities, and that taking Praziquantel can cure and prevent this infection, they decided to let the children take the treatment. The MENTOR/DPS team further explained how to mitigate possible side effects of the treatment, by not taking the drug on a empty stomach, and the importance of good hygiene practices and handwashing related to schistosomiasis infections, have been explained. The team stayed to survey the treatment campaign till it was completed after 3 days.

The target group for the treatment at the school was over 2000 children, and after 3 days all of the targeted children have taken the drugs. This is a rarely seen high participation rate of 100%. Through the involvement and adherence of teachers and parents, the treatment rate on this school in Canhe, is one of the success stories of this campaign. All children, parents and teachers are now aware of schistosomiasis infections and the prevention and treatment possibilities. All credit for this success goes to the partnership Mentor/DPS/DPE that has been very effective to tackle these unforeseen challenges.

Pictures of the Praziquantel distribution campaign in Canhe, Huambo

(3-5 November 2014):



Pictures 1, 2,3 e 4: Children organised to line-up for treatment



Pictures 5, 6, 7 e 8: children washing hands



Pictures 7, 8, 9 e 10: *Children measured to define the needed treatment dose*



Pictures 11, 12, 13 e 14: *Children taking Praziquantel*