Doctors with Africa CUAMM has been the first NGO working in the international health field to be recognized in Italy and is the largest Italian organization for the promotion and protection of health in Africa. It works with a long-term developmental perspective. To this end, in Italy and Africa, it is engaged in training, research, dissemination of scientific knowledge, and ensuring the universal fulfilment of the fundamental human right to health.

Doctors with Africa is for everyone who believes in values like dialogue, cooperation, volunteerism, exchange between cultures, friendship between people, the defense of human rights, respect for life, the choice to help the poor, the spirit of service, and those who support the organization’s action criteria.

VALUES

- «With Africa»: the organization works exclusively with African populations, engaging local human resources at all levels.
- Experience: CUAMM draws on over sixty-six years of work to support developing countries.
- Specific, exclusive expertise in medicine and health.

PRIORITY ISSUES

- Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.
- Nutrition.
- Infectious diseases.
- Non communicable diseases (NCDs) and traumas.
- Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

TODAY

Doctors with Africa CUAMM is currently operating in Angola, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda through:

- 23 Hospitals
- 80 Districts (for public health activities, mother-child care, fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, training)
- 3 Nursing schools
- 1 University (Mozambique)
- 4,581 Human resources
- 270 International European professionals

A 71-YEARS HISTORY

2,060 People have left Italy and other countries to work on projects: of these, 515 returned on one or more occasions

232 Hospitals have been served

43 Countries of intervention
Our Intervention in Angola

Doctors with Africa Cuamm has been present in Angola since 1997, intervening in the province of Uige to face the emergency caused by the civil war.

Since then, intervention has expanded to other provinces, Luanda and Cunene, focusing on development projects and strengthening of the local health system, offering technical assistance and support services. Doctors with Africa CUAMM promotes maternal and child health and intervenes to combat diabetes, hypertension, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

1997 Emergency in Uige

With the country in civil war the first emergency emergency interventions in the province of UIGE are effected.

2004 Change of Approach

Supporting the health system in the pathway from emergency to development, interventions in Luanda and in the provinces of Uige and Cunene.

2012 Mothers and Children First

The program “Mothers and children first” is initiated to ensure access to safe childbirth and newborn care in 4 African countries. In 2016, the Program continues with a focus on nutrition, and expands to 3 additional countries.

2014 Intervention on NCDs

Innovative intervention in Luanda to improve the diagnosis of diabetes and hypertension in patients with TB.

2018 Pilot Program on TB

The community pilot program Directly Observed Treatment (DOT) is initiated to fight tuberculosis in 6 municipalities in 5 provinces of the country. At the hospital of Chiulo a project to provide constant electricity to the hospital thanks to a photovoltaic system gets started.

2020-2021 An Ongoing Commitment

The Covid-19 pandemic greatly complicates project implementation. In spite of everything, CUAMM continues to deal with maternal-child health and nutrition in the municipality of Ombadjia, and health activities for the improvement of services of diagnosis, management and assistance to HIV-positive and Tb-infected patients in Luanda.

2014

2022

2018

2004

2012

2014

2020-2021

What’s Next

The intervention expands to the municipality of Cahama in the field of nutrition. WASH activities are introduced in the municipalities of Ombadjia and Cahama.
In 2000, at the invitation of the Diocese of Ondjiva, Doctors with Africa Cuamm began its intervention in the Province of Cunene, supporting the Catholic Mission Hospital of Chiulo, with the main objective of promoting access to quality health services for the most vulnerable population (pregnant women and children). In these years, the protection of neonatal and maternal-child health has been guaranteed, with particular attention to nutrition. Near the hospital of Chiulo, a “Casa de espera” (“House of hope”) has been set up, a structure that hosts pregnant women waiting to give birth, making it possible to reduce the distances that separate the hospital and the health centers – there are 36 peripheral health facilities in the area – and that result in women all too often giving birth at home, not assisted by qualified personnel.

In 2021 the women hosted in Casa de espera were 767 with an average of 64 women per month.

In addition, in these years have been guaranteed:
- the equipment of basic equipment for the hospital and peripheral health centers;
- the supply of food for the women hosted in the waiting houses, for the malnourished children admitted to the hospital of Chiulo, and for the peripheral health centers;
- supervision visits;
- training sessions for local health personnel and community agents;
- community outreach activities, such as cooking demonstrations;
- distribution of PPE, in support of the government, to contain the spread of Covid-19.

Action is taken through Mobile Brigades, groups of health workers who move from community to community to provide basic medical care by helping families and children overcome barriers to accessing health services. In particular, the mobile brigades deal with vaccinations, prenatal visits, screening for malnutrition, and distribution of food kits to the most vulnerable groups.

### PROVINCE OF CUNENE AND CHIULO HOSPITAL (Data 2021)

- **234** Beds
- **OUTPATIENT VISITS**
  - **18,388** Total outpatient visits
- **INPATIENTS**
  - **4,510** Total admissions
- **MATERNITY**
  - **1,805** Total deliveries of which
    - **173** Total caesarean sections
    - **767** Pregnant women hosted in Casa de espera
- **ANC VISITS**
  - **4,890** Total prenatal visits
- **MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH**
  - **182** Malnourished children hospitalized
  - **11,368** Vaccinated women and children under 5 years of age
- **TRAINING**
  - **120** Midwives trained and contracted
PROVINCE OF LUANDA

In 2016, an innovative project for the diagnosis of chronic non-communicable diseases, diabetes and hypertension, related to positive TB cases, was launched in the province of Luanda.

Since then, CUAMM has ensured continuity of screening, awareness and diabetes prevention activities in 6 health centers in Luanda Province. It has also contributed to the development of the National Diabetes Manual for health workers, and has supported the Luanda Province Health Department in drafting guidelines on the diagnosis and management of type 2 diabetes.

CUAMM is an important partner at national level for the fight against TB. In January 2005, the National Tuberculosis Control Program support project funded by Global Fund ATM through UNDP begins in Luanda, and CUAMM provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Health.

In 2017, a pilot community-based directly observed treatment (CB-DOTS) project is launched in 6 municipalities in 5 provinces nationwide, involving over 200 community agents trained to combat the spread of the disease. In 2018, support is strengthened for two specialized facilities in Luanda to improve the diagnostic quality and management of patients with TB and TB-related HIV, and to start digitizing health records.

Finally, the presence in Luanda was extended with a project to support the Municipality of Kilamba Kiaxi to promote HIV “test and treat” and thus ensure continuous and integrated care for HIV patients.

Currently, CUAMM is active in the Province, particularly in the municipalities of Maianga and Kilamba Kiaxi, with an intervention focused on infectious diseases: tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS, with particular attention to Covid-19.
BEHIND THE NUMBERS: FACES AND STORIES

BEING A MIDWIFE IN ANGOLA
Florentina Maria and Fernanda Felicia are two traditional parteiras, two midwives aged 66 and 62. They live in the rural area of Humbe, Cunene province, and every month they walk among the communities to hold awareness meetings on safe childbirth, but also on different public health issues such as hygiene and malaria prevention. During the activities they meet up to 60 people. Of those, many are pregnant women and men are often present as well. «Talking to the men is important because they are often the ones who decide whether women can go to the hospital to give birth, or for medical checkups, or to the casa de espera of hospitals. The biggest difficulties occur when pregnant women do not want to go to medical appointments so as not to be far from home, many do not have the money to do so. Sometimes they come to call us because women have not gone to the hospital or health centers to give birth and complications occur. In these cases we cannot help because only in hospitals can they receive the necessary care. We talk about the possibility of going to the case de espera, where there is support, there is food, and if they do not have money for passage, we advise them to approach little by little, because distance is another great difficulty». Both of them participate in the training meetings that Cuamm organizes: «They are important moments in which we learn new things, for example about malnutrition and hygiene care, which are fundamental to prevent various diseases».

KNOWLEDGE: THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS HEALTH
“Joana, an 18 year old pregnant girl with her boyfriend Alexander, 23, arrived to be tested for HIV in one of the health centers where prevention and care services for people living with HIV are active”, recounts one of the health workers. After testing the couple, Joana tested positive while Alexander tested negative; a case defined as “discordant couple”. Joana was in shock, she began to ask herself a thousand questions about what would become of her, what people would think; Alexander tried to calm her down by reminding her that she also had to think about their child. “We explained to Joana and Alexander the advantages of the therapy that if followed properly makes the viral load undetectable, so the HIV infection cannot be transmitted to either the child or the partner.” They accepted the situation and since that day Alexander accompanies her to check-ups, helping her to follow the therapy properly. Today they are well, and Alexander and the baby are negative. Improving the health of a community starts from a greater awareness of health issues, especially those strongly linked to taboos and prejudices, such as HIV. This is precisely the key role of community activists who work to inform and raise awareness in communities about the importance of prevention, and testing for early detection of the disease. They do this through awareness campaigns and regular home visits.
Pregnant women hosted in the Casa de espera, Chiulo

Activities at community level for mother and child health, Cunene Province

Paediatric visit at Chiulo Hospital, photo Matteo De Mayda

Training activities, Luanda

Screening of children’s nutritional status, Chiulo

Antenatal care visit, Chiulo
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Cover
Knowledge is the “armour” of the mind

Back cover
Photo Matteo De Mayda