

pepe
network

MISSÕES MUNDIAIS[®]



PEPE
TRANSFORMATION STORIES



FACTSHEET

Title

TRANSFORMATION STORIES

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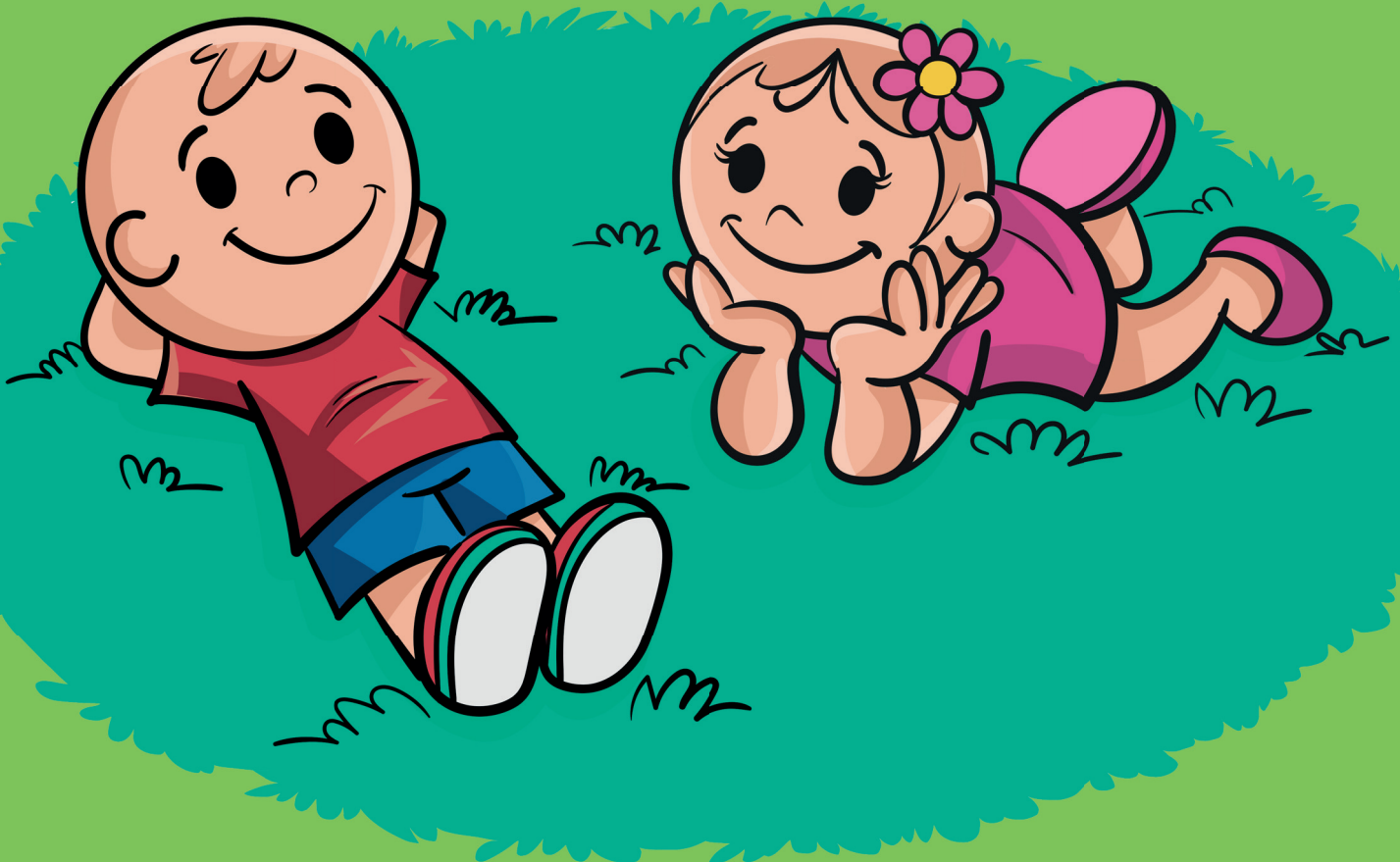
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Introduction

How it all started

PEPE - Preschool Education Program, originated in Brazil in 1992, with the couple Stuart and Georgina Christine, from BBMS World Mission- British Baptist Missionary Society.

During a visit by the couple to a poor community in the city of São Paulo, a local woman, realizing their interest in helping local children, asked them what they could do to help the community.

Faced with this challenge and realizing the great lack of preparation of the community children to enter elementary school with the hope of educational success, partner Georgina was willing to start a work of preschool support with them. To confirm the need for this type of initiative, a survey was conducted with 100 families from the community that determined the number of children, aged 4 to 6 years, who were without access to preschool preparation. The results of the research showed the existing need and the great interest on the part of mothers in this type of work.

Thus, in August 1992 the Preschool Education Program (PEPE) was born with 25 children aged 5 and 6 years who were already attended through the Brazilian Association of

Encouragement and Support to Man, ABIAH.

The success of the program in that community aroused the interest of others and so the program began to expand to other places in São Paulo in informal places. During the following years Georgina, supported by the competent educators Kátia Medeiros and Irene Arcanjo, devoted herself to improving the curriculum content of PEPE and establishing the principle of continuous training of educators - an emphasis that has become a fundamental feature of the program.

In 2000, in order to extend the project to the impoverished states of northeastern Brazil, PEPE was implemented in Piauí through the dedicated work of Iolanda Miranda, a native from Piauí, who had worked for six years with PEPE in the slum of Heliópolis, São Paulo. The project easily adapted to local culture and gained a new area of activity with the name of "Projeto Luz no Nordeste (Light to the Northeast Project)".

Widening borders

In 2001, the moment of international expansion



Stuart and Georgina Christine.

took place. The program was presented to leaders of churches and communities in Mozambique, with the support of Pedagogue Terezinha Candieiro, at a time when the country was seeking to eradicate poverty through education and work. It was also introduced to other leaders in Latin America through Professors Lydia Klava and Lúcia Martiniano. And so, PEPE began to expand to several countries on both continents, in resources deprived disadvantaged communities, with the support of ABIAH.

A next and decisive step in the history of PEPE was taken in 2005 when, in order to facilitate the expansion of the program and to create a cooperation structure, there was a need to organize a "network" of PEPE, called PEPE Network, initiated by Stuart Christine and coordinated by Terezinha Candieiro.

It was fundamental in this beginning of international expansion the continuous emphasis on the development of the curriculum base, the

training system of educators, and especially the preparation of coordinators responsible for introducing and supervising PEPE in Brazil and abroad.

The following period was characterized by several important advances.

The first was the organizational/administrative development of PEPE through the network that provided solid but flexible structures necessary for the continuation of its international expansion. This process included the formalization and printing in Portuguese, Spanish, French and English of the main texts of the basic curriculum and training programs of educators and coordinators. The second was the launching of PEPE Network website, with information about the program for an increasingly diverse audience. A third significant initiative was the production of modules and complementary materials to the basic curriculum, addressing topics such as child protection and environmental conservation.

PEPE has made a huge impact on the lives of children, families and communities around the world. We have countless testimonies of children who have experienced this transformation over the years. This needed to be recorded.

Therefore, it is with immense joy and gratitude that we launch the first edition of the E-book STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION where several uplifting stories that show the power and love of God in words and actions are recorded.

We hope these stories will serve for your inspiration and edification!

Terezinha Candieiro

Terezinha Candieiro
General coordinator PEPE International



Pr. Paulo.

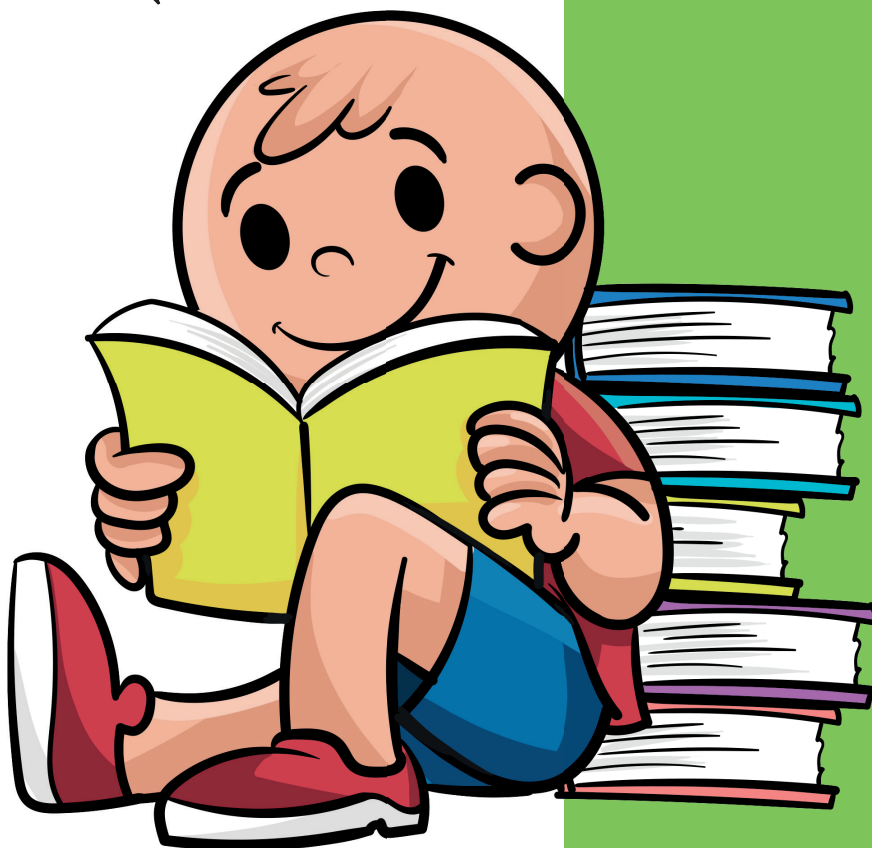


Terezinha Candieiro.

Introduction

Hi, I'm Pepito. You may have heard about PEPE, a program that helps children develop important skills for school success, and also to announce to them God's love and teach them how special they are.

In our new work, which is this E-book with stories of transformation in the lives of PEPE children, I will share with you some experiences I have had while visiting several of our units around the world. I am very happy with this opportunity and I want to invite you to come with me on this exciting journey.



CAPE VERDE

The power to transform lives

Cape Verde is an archipelago formed by volcanic islands that lies in West Africa. The country is full of beautiful beaches and stands out with remarkable musical rhythms such as “morna and coladeira”.

In this place we find a PEPE that has lived the power to transform the lives of many children and also their families.

Transformation, that's exactly what happened to little Diego. The boy arrived very shy, but soon was integrating and making friends in PEPE. The lack of confidence gave way to a wide smile that won everyone.

When he got home, Diego had a habit of sharing with his mommy everything he had learned at PEPE. He showed with joy, for example, how he had learned to count from 1 to 20, that he already knew how to distinguish colors and geometric shapes and so much knowledge he acquired in our project.

Because of this habit, Diego also shared the Bible stories he learned and how good Jesus was! As Diego learned to pray at PEPE he also began praying at home before meals and at bedtime, expressing his

gratitude and asking for the Lord's protection. This is how his mother also learned to pray so she could accompany her son in his prayers.

Diego started going to Sunday Bible School whenever there was some special activity. The little one really loved being in church and this, in a way, on many occasions forced his mother to accompany him. The Bible says that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. In this way, little by little his mother's heart was broken by the love of Jesus and today, already converted and baptized, she is a leader in the church.

Diego never went to the temple alone anymore. With great pride and joy we can see him arrive, every Sunday, holding hands with his mother.

It was so beautiful to meet Diego and see how God's

love transformed his life and his family. When we support PEPE, we help to continue saving the lives of adults and children, and with them, future generations.



COLOMBIA

Life marks

Colombia is a country in the far north of South America. With beautiful landscapes ranging from beaches and tropical forests to the high and icy mountains of the Andes Mountains. On its agriculture, stands out coffee plantations.

In Colombia, we have a PEPE that serves children whose families survive recycling in a city dump. Among these special children we find Mara. It was wonderful to meet Mara, because she is a really beautiful and friendly girl. However, when Mara arrived at PEPE she had sad eyes and her face was marked by scars.

Mara's life story though short is so full of sad moments. Her parents are in prison for murder, and so she was left in her grandmother's care. Unfortunately, this grandmother didn't want her and kicked her out of the

house making her live on the street. But thank God Mara was collected by the great-grandmother, who shares a room with less than six square meters with the girl and 13 more pets. Even in this difficult situation, Mara felt loved by her great-grandmother. However, one day the grandmother, who had previously abandoned her, arrived at the house very drunk and began to hit Mara with violence. It was in this episode that the girl had her face marked.

After that fateful day the church came together and decided to take responsibility for Mara. The girl joined PEPE where she received love, care and protection from each missionary-educator.

We spent a lot of time talking to her, playing guitar and singing. We saw how Mara fed herself and played with joy

because at PEPE she received the protection and care she needed and was entitled to, because all the children in the world need to be cared for, respected and valued.

Today, little Mara still has her face marked by the violence of her grandmother, but without a doubt she also has her heart marked by the love of Jesus and that dear church. The Bible says that the joyful heart makes the face cheerful and this is exactly what happens to Mara. The scars are still there, but her sweet and cheerful heart overlaps any scar, turning her into a beautiful and cheerful girl.



NICARAGUA

Sharing what we hear and see

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America and has agriculture as its main economic source. On the east coast of the country there are active volcanic mountains, while to the south, two great lakes, Managua and Nicaragua. It has diverse flora and fauna with tropical forests full of birds, jaguars, snakes, lizards, turtles, monkeys and anteater.

When I arrived in Nicaragua I met Abigail, a 9-year-old girl who graduated from the first class of PEPE “Joias de Jesus” (Jesus jewels). Her mother said that since her daughter joined PEPE she has always invited her to church, but she never accepted. Four years passed and then her little brother David also went to study at PEPE. After that, there were already two kids insisting that she went with them to church.

Abigail’s mother received several visits from the missionary-educators, who prayed for her and her entire family and also invited her to church. But she, as usual, always refused the invitation, although she already felt in her heart a will and curiosity to

see what really was so good in that church that her children loved so much. A few months later, the Lord instilled this mother’s heart in such a way that she decided to attend church service, where she was touched so strongly that she accepted the Lord Jesus as her savior.

Shortly thereafter, that mother rejoiced in witnessing the conversions of her husband and mother-in-law, and today, the whole family is firmly in the church worshipping our God. They got married, were

baptized, and worship God along with their little girl, Abigail.

Acts 4: 20 says we can’t help but talk about what we’ve seen and heard. That’s exactly what those two little children did, shared what they heard and saw and was able to reach the whole family for Jesus, that’s witnessing.



MOZAMBIQUE

Inclusive Education: an achievement in PEPE Mozambique

Mozambique is a country in southeastern Africa, whose long coastline in the Indian Ocean is permeated by well-known beaches, such as Tofo, and marine parks near the coast. In the Quirimbas archipelago, a 250-kilometer strip of coral islands, the mangrove-covered island of Ibo has colonial-era ruins that have survived since the period of the Portuguese domain. The Bazaruto archipelago, further south, has reefs that protect rare marine species such as dugongs.

In Mozambique we have several PEPE units with many

children enrolled. Among them, there are several children with special needs who need to be met so that they can be included in the whole learning teaching process.

One of our PEPE's in Mozambique has made a great effort to live up to inclusion. The inclusion proposal arose with the objective of enabling the intellectual, affective and physical development of children, regardless of their physical, sensory, cognitive or emotional condition. After all, every child has the need and possibility to live, interact, learn, share and be happy.

The first challenge towards inclusion was to develop an awareness work with the missionary-educators, leading them to commit to respect for diversity recognizing that, even if different paths are needed for the learning process, all children should be seen as people with possibilities and difficulties that can be overcome or minimized.

The visit of Pr. Adoniram Melo, responsible for the Ministry of Special people at the first Baptist church in Curitiba, who gave a course of sign language to our missionary-educators, was a milestone to overcome this challenge.

Among the participants of the course, God raised Brother António Daniel, from the Baptist Church of Munhava, who during the school holidays of PEPE visited the houses of the community trying to find children with disabilities, but could not find any child. Not because there were no children, but because parents who have children with any type of disability, whether visual, auditory, mental or physical, feel extremely ashamed and keep children hidden at home.



This is because there is a popular belief that these children were bewitched still in the womb of the mother, because the parents began some ritual of sorcery and did not meet all the demands having been punished for it. It is believed that when the pact is not fulfilled, evil turns against the son who is about to be born. Faced with these beliefs, parents feel ashamed and try to hide as much as possible their children with disabilities.

But for the glory of God, a child has been identified. Egberto, 4 years old, hearing and physical impaired. At first his parents resisted and didn't want to let him go to PEPE. However, when they realized that the son would be treated with love and equality before the other children, even though they were somewhat reluctant, they agreed to send the boy to the project. It didn't take long and other parents also decided to allow their children to be enrolled at PEPE. Currently, PEPE "FLORES DE JESUS" (Jesus flowers) has three children with special needs: Egberto, Cleonice and Caetano, all 4 years old.

At first, the children felt uncomfortable with the presence of the "different" because they were not used to interacting with someone who was not like them, but wisely, the missionary-educator intervened arousing friendship and kindness among the group. Currently, it is notorious the great approximation between all the children in the class. Gestures of affection, such as kisses, hugs, sharing the snack, among others, can be

seen daily. It was beautiful to see all the children playing together and learning that despite the differences they are all loved by God and have a special place in His heart.

"This experience has shown that interaction is important to everyone. All children developed intellectually and socially. Hearing children also learn sign language to communicate with deaf children and respect for diversity becomes a value in the PEPE unit."

The families of the children have reacted with euphoria and gratitude to what has happened to their children with expressions such as: "We see joy stamped in our child's face." "Thank God, the church school welcomed our son." In the community, the church has been the target of praise such as: "This church really cares about people, even those no one wants around," or "In the church school, everyone is treated equally."

Four children may seem very little, but when we look at the Bible that says a soul is worth more than the whole world; then we rejoice in the privilege of starting this work, even if it is with a single unit. In addition, we believe that through this work other parents will have the courage to bring their children and other missionary-educators will be awakened to develop inclusion in their churches.



SOUTH ASIA

PEPE for all, without distinction

This region of South Asia has diverse geography, from the peaks of the Himalayas to the coast of the Indian Ocean, with snowy mountains, deserts, rainforests and beaches. It has a diverse fauna with large animals such as tigers, lions, elephants, leopards, rhinos and bears, but also many snakes, birds and monkeys among others. It has a history dating back five millennia. With the second largest population in the world, the people of the region are formed by a mixture of ethnicities with their own religions, languages and habits.

When I arrived at PEPE in South Asia I was ecstatic with so much beauty, but also with so much poverty and dirt. There are very rich people and some extremely poor people in that place. It was in the middle of all this that I got to know John. He was a deaf child from a community in that area. John did not play with other children

and was never far from his mother because he was afraid to relate to other children and people due to his deafness.

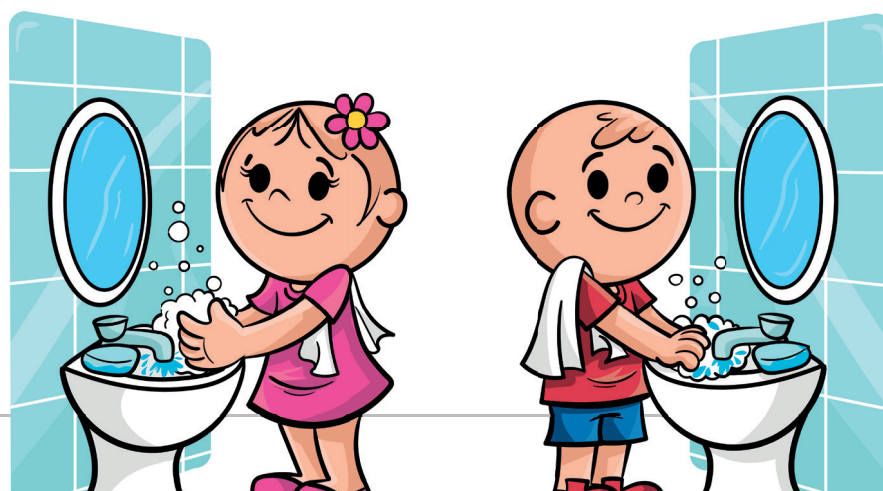
Initially, John's mother was afraid to bring him to be enrolled at PEPE, but after talking to the missionary-educators she felt confident and brought John to the project.

On the first day John cried a lot when his mother left him there at PEPE, but soon the teacher started playing with him and then the boy calmed down. That day, John interacted with other children for the first time and the children, in turn, welcomed him very well. The little boy learned to wash his hands and brush his teeth. Also, he was really charmed by the PEPE history books. The books caught John's attention, for in his silence, those pages interacted with him.

In just one week we saw the Power of God act in John's life

and he started playing with the other children and interacting with PEPE educators. A child who did not let go of his mother for fear of the world now ventures into the world of relationships, developing friendship and companionship with other people around him.

PEPE has been a channel of innovation and adequacy in many areas, such as the inclusion and celebration of diversity. The Bible says that we are all equal before God, created in His image and likeness. So we must show the world that we are all equal before our God.



PARAGUAY

When are we going to eat?

In this country whose population originates in the Guarani Indians and Spanish conquerors, poverty drives thousands of children away from school. Many are forced to stay at home with their parents, who often end up taking out the revolt for not having a way to put a plate of food on the table.

That was the case with Caesar, a cute, smart-eyed, very intelligent boy. He began to go to church through his older brother, and began studying at PEPE.

He always arrived at the unit with dirty clothes; seemed never to bathe. In the cold, Cesar did not show up because he had no winter clothes. But his concern was always the same: the snack. The questions to the missionary-educator about the time of food were insistent.

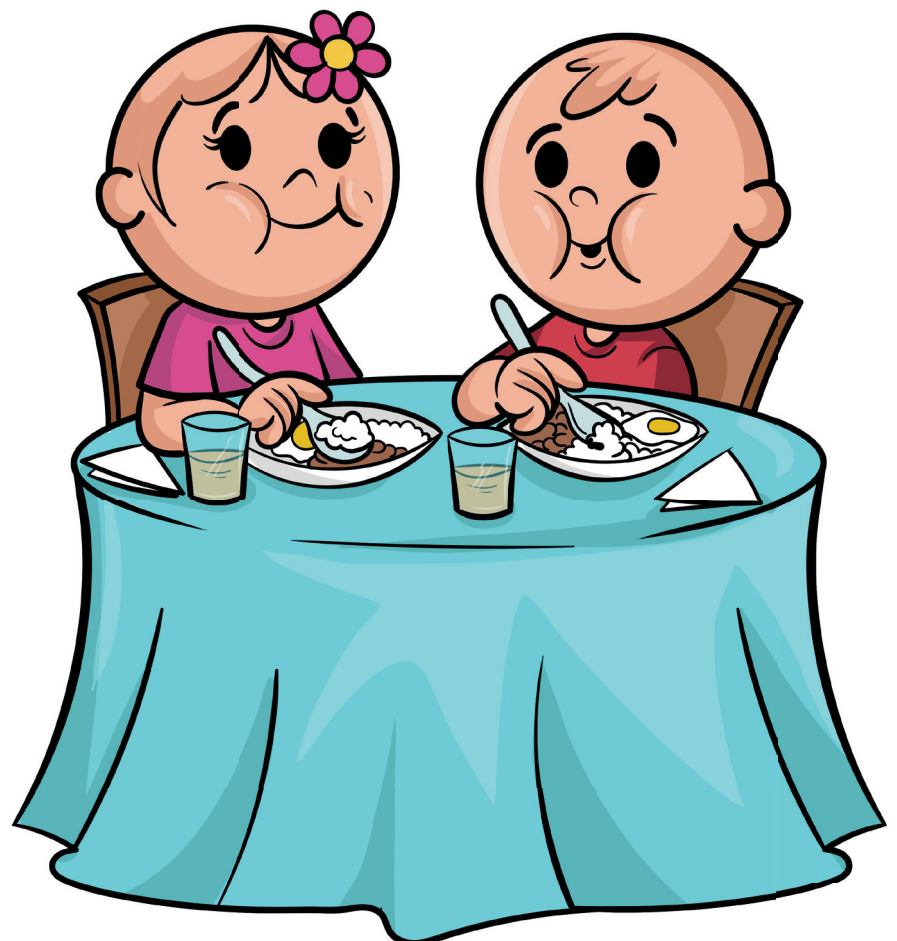
However, as the days went by she began to see in Caesar not only the hunger for lunch, but the spiritual hunger of a boy in a situation of vulnerability, but precious in the eyes of God.

The missionary-educator got clothes and shoes for the boy. Now he always arrives clean and combed, although he still wonders about the snack.

On a certain occasion, Cesar arrived late and, while apologizing to his “aunt” revealed that his father had arrived home drunk the night before. Cesar’s father almost committed an act of violence against his own son.

In his simplicity, Cesar told the missionary-educator that he asked Jesus to make his father “be good” and then he fell asleep.

Right there the missionary prayed with Caesar asking God to protect him and to transform his father’s life, which actually happened. God transformed the life of that man and his home. And surely the lesson he learned, will edify many other families.



PERU

Mario's prayer

The diverse landscape of Peru, with plains, on the Pacific coast; high peaks in the Andes; and the Amazon Rainforest in the east makes this country one of the most picturesque in Latin America. The majority of the population composed of about 29.4 million inhabitants lives on the coast that is home to the capital, Lima. A scenario of any child's dreams.

And in this South American country there are also PEPE units. It was in one of them that a beautiful boy experienced God's care for his parents.

Mario, who was always used to receiving the care of his mother every time he became ill, found himself in trouble when his parents were infected with the coronavirus. It was in this moment of affliction that

this "pepito" learned the secret of God's heart, the prayer.

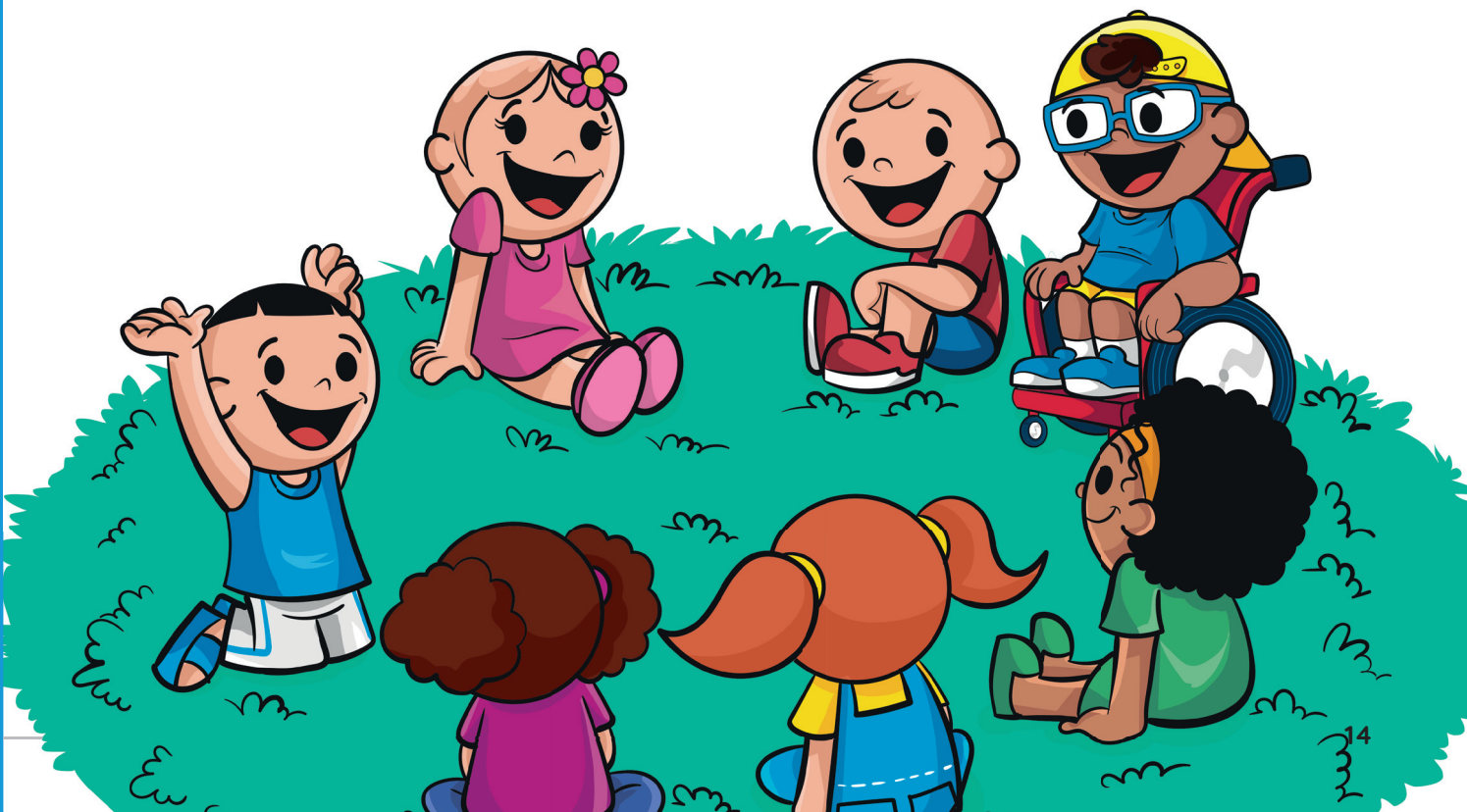
With a broken but sincere heart, Mario prayed, "Heavenly Father, heal my father and my mother!".

His parents were in serious condition. They breathed with difficulty and needed to be taken to the hospital where they stayed for many days intubated in the Intensive Care Unit - ICU.

Despite being a child, Mario was very worried. He received all the care and support of the missionary-educator and the whole church of his PEPE, who joined in a chain of prayer. Days later, overcoming all possible natural barriers, his parents walked out of the hospital and returned home.

And so God worked the great miracle in that family. The Lord not only healed Mario's parents, but also gave them the opportunity to know His love. And Mario didn't forget to say, "Daddy in Heaven, thank you for healing my father and mother!".

God heard and answered his prayer, bringing blessing to that whole family. It is the power of God that has transformed homes that cry out for the name of the Lord. All because a child has accepted the Word into his heart and made it multiply.



SENEGAL

Learning to smile

In this African country of many beaches, being a child is not a piece of cake. There, families are used to sending their children to Quranic schools, where they not only learn the Qur'an— the holy book of Muslims— but are also forced to beg in the streets, supposedly to learn to be humble.

But PEPE has made all the difference in the lives of children also in Senegal. Lina, only 5 years old, is one of the fruits of this work. She was born in Côte d'Ivoire and, along with her parents, fled the war that dominated her country. Lina could have become one more child begging in the streets, but God had other plans for her life. She arrived at PEPE unit very skinny, with marks of a strong

malnutrition. She was always sad and constantly crying. The little girl had serious difficulty in concentrating.

But at PEPE, Lina began to receive love, affection and care for her health and food. She soon began to show improvements in her nutritional condition, and began to gain weight. She went on to run and play with her friends and her ability to concentrate on activities improved every day. Lina began to interact during the activities of her class, which made her missionary-educator very happy.

A year went by and Lina was another child. She was always smiling, her cheeks became chubby and she never got

tired of playing with the other "pepitos".

Lina's parents don't hide the joy of seeing their daughter on the right track. A testimony of how everything is possible in the face of God's transforming power in a child's life.



VENEZUELA

In God's footsteps

Extreme poverty has affected Venezuela even before the coronavirus pandemic. And there PEPE is not just a place to study. In fact, the missionary-educators know that many children taken to a PEPE unit are there in search of their only meal of the day. Misery is perceived in every detail and moves the heart of those who have been called by God to care for these little ones.

One day, missionary-educator Mary continued to take and deliver food to children and their families, when God made her look down and see the feet of those boys and girls. Her eyes widened before shoes so old, torn and pierced. Her heart was so tight that her only reaction at that moment was to ask God to send shoes to those children, not any shoes, but good shoes that showed them that they were important and special to God and to everyone in PEPE.

Days later, a surprise! The missionary-educator's prayer was answered. That PEPE Venezuela unit received a donation of 28 children's shoes that any child from the most affluent family would like to wear.

Mary rejoiced in being able to be a channel of God to give His gift to those children.

The smile on each face when they saw that the shoes were exactly the size of their foot filled with joy the heart of the missionary-educator. She recognized that once again she was able to know even more of the wonderful God, who loves even in the smallest details!

But there are still a lot of kids with flat shoes needing someone to look after them. There are almost 20,000 children in the PEPE worldwide, about 2,000 in Venezuelan units alone. And there are still many others who have not even reached PEPE and need this affection of God.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Felix's prayer

Can you imagine living in a Caribbean country with crystal clear beaches and an exuberant green? That's the Dominican Republic! It could be the perfect place to live, were it not for the high poverty rates of its population and a Christianity mostly still based on idolatry.

It is in this country, that many people choose just to spend the holidays, that Felix, a boy from one of the PEPE units, lives. He often arrived very sad and nervous for the activities. His father was an alcoholic and he was always drunk. Alcohol made him violent and Felix's father almost always took an axe and, screaming, threatened to kill his own wife.

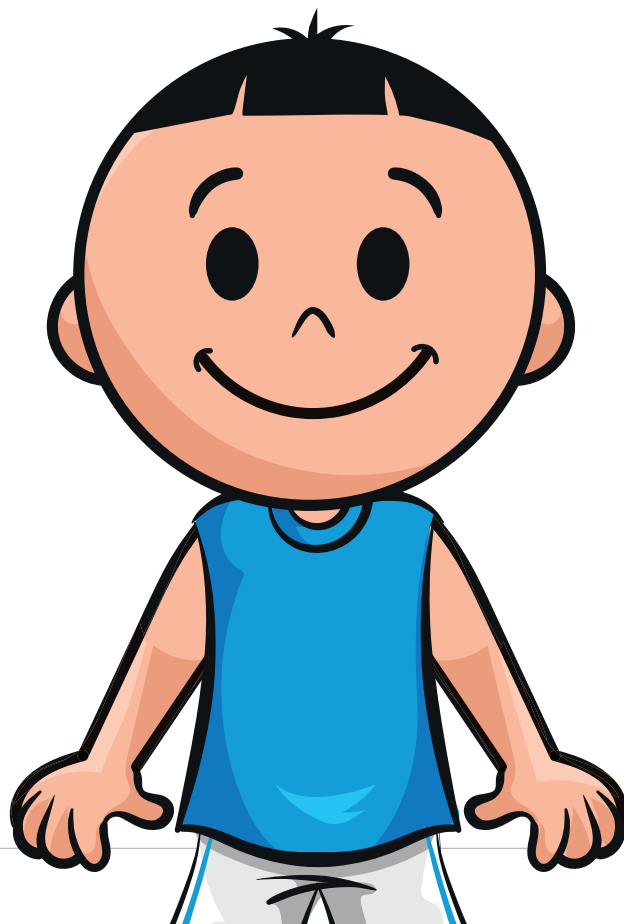
Felix witnessed all that fighting day after day and was turning into an increasingly nervous and sad child. Fights with friends were constant. But it was at PEPE that this boy felt loved, respected and learned to speak to God, asking for help when he was afraid. Gradually, Felix began to act as Jesus' friends acted when they were on the boat in the middle of a storm. He looked at the target, which is Christ. The process of transformation in Felix's life led Jesus into his home.

The boy had the strength in Jesus to tell his father that everything he was doing with his mother and the whole family was a sin. And who told about the boy's attitude to a missionary-educator was his own father, during the graduation of Felix's class.

The father listened to his son's prayers at mealtime, when he went to sleep and woke up. The child asked God to remove the axe from his house so that the parents would not fight anymore. The father also said that one fine day, he searched the axe all over the house, fought with all who could have disappeared with him, but in reality the axe simply disappeared.

The fights decreased with the disappearance of the axe and the father understood that his son had a joy that he did not have, but that he longed for.

The transformation happened and today this family is firm with God, participating in a church. A child's prayer makes all the difference and brought complete joy to Felix's house.



GAMBIA

Yes, Jesus loves me!

Gambia is one of many Muslim-majority African countries. There, children usually grow up under the teachings of the Q'uran, the holy book of Islam. In Erick's family, only 5 years old, everyone is Muslim.

Bringing PEPE to this region was not one of the easiest tasks. But despite being a preschool unit with Christian principles, the program was well accepted by Erick's mother who soon enrolled her son in the new unit.

When Erick got to PEPE, he cried a lot, fought with the other kids and whenever he got nervous, he peed in his clothes.

One week, the missionary-educator of the unit began teaching children about God's love for them; and said that to receive this love, they had to love one another. That same week, she taught the children to sing a song that says, "Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me because the Bible tells me so".

Children came home singing this truth every day. And Erick was no different. Gradually he made friends, stopped being aggressive and went on to pee only in the bathroom.

The song he learned at PEPE he also sang at home. But his grandmother didn't like it and scolded him. However, the boy already had this truth in his heart and continued to declare the love of Jesus through this song. Unsatisfied, the grandmother oriented Erick's mother to prohibit him to study at PEPE.

The mother went to the educator and revealed what was happening. She understood that the program had somehow changed her son's behavior. Although very grateful for this, she said she needed to obey her own mother. So she did with much sadness.

Some time later, when the missionary-educators visited other children in the program, they found Erick on the way. As soon as he saw them, he began to sing, "Yes, Jesus loves me...". They rejoiced to see that the boy still had this truth in his heart, as did many other children in that community.

PEPE Gambia team asks for prayers for all Muslim children to have the opportunity to hear of Jesus' love that transforms lives.



ANGOLA

Children are also called to serve

PEPE is seen as a strategic program in the requalification of the development of the church, linked to evangelization, education and social assistance.

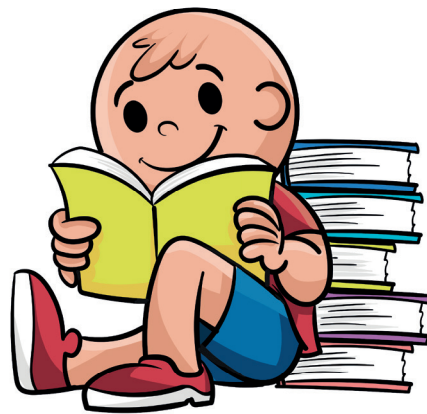
In Angola, the government reaffirmed its commitment to the development and reach of millennium targets that directly and indirectly reach children. And the PEPE is aligned with local and government initiatives for the benefit of the little ones. There are many churches, missionary-educators, and Christian leaders committed to this vision.

The involvement of all has given rise to testimonies of great achievements such as that of Neusa, now a teenager. She joined PEPE when she was very small. Orphaned by a father and mother, Neusa lives with her grandmother, but with joy and with many expectations of serving Jesus and fulfilling her mission as a future missionary-educator of PEPE.

It was by attending the graduation of a class of missionary-educators of PEPE that she made an important decision for her life. There, Neusa asked for the opportunity to pronounce the speech she had written herself. In it, Neusa declared her desire to be a missionary-educator at PEPE in Luanda, the Angolan capital.

Neusa was blessed by PEPE as a child, and now answered God's call to bless many other children who have no opportunity to education and to know Christ.

"Many other seeds are being planted in units in more than 30 countries where PEPE is present. Continuing to spread the seeds and watering the soil of the children's hearts is our responsibility and the Lord will give growth."



Farewell

Have you seen how many stories of transformation I've had the opportunity to get to know as I travel through PEPE units around the world?

They're real, true stories. God has done wonders in the lives of many children, families and communities around the world! When you pray and cooperate with PEPE you are a participant in what God is doing in the lives of thousands of children.

This was our first edition. We have numerous testimonies that will be part of the upcoming editions. Stay tuned to follow our productions and rejoice with us with the stories of transformation.

It was a pleasure to be with you and drive you on your first trip through PEPE units in the world!

