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SOLTHIS: sharing medical expertise to promote national skills

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1: Solthis Paris, 2: Solthis Mali, 3: Solthis Niger, 4: Solthis Madagascar.

Issue: How to help local stakeholders organize sustainable care to people infected by HIV/AIDS: **medical support to national access to ARV programs in Africa.**

Description: Founded in July 2003 by Pr Christine Katlama and Pr Gilles Brucker *Solidarité Thérapeutique et Initiatives contre le Sida* (SOLTHIS) is an independent NGO committed to enabling access to antiretroviral drugs for people suffering from HIV/AIDS.

SOLTHIS provides daily technical support to local care structures, by bringing them:

- medical training in hospital and community care centers,
- technical support in HIV-related medicine and science
- assistance and counseling in:
 - care and laboratory (virology, immunology, bacteriology);
 - PMTCT prevention and organisation;
 - data collection and epidemiological evaluation;
 - pharmacy management;
 - AIDS policies.

A scientific committee meets every month to analyse data from the field and issue technical recommendations.



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Mali

- Launched in: Dec. 2003
- Location: Ségou region
- 6 prescribing clinics in the Ségou district and 3 district referral health centres currently being activated.
- 8 mother-and-child treatment centres in the Ségou district, 6 centres in the Bla and Niono district since January 2006 and 4 centres planned for the San district.
- 12 prescribing physicians
- 804 ARV treatments begun in April 2006
- 32 children monitored under ARV

Niger

- Launched in: October 2004
- Locations: Niamey, Zinder
- 12 prescribing sites
- 23 prescribing doctors
- More than 1200 ARV treatments initiated at this time

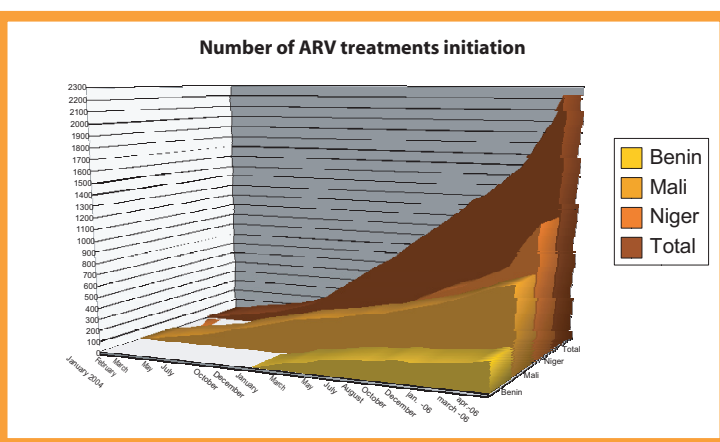
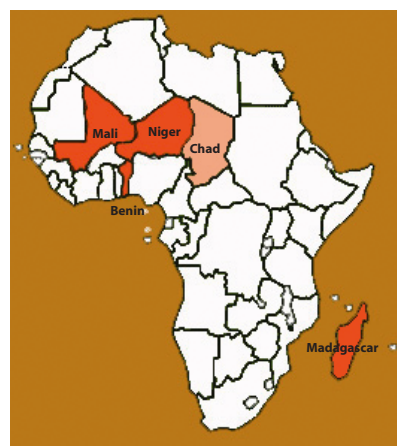
Benin

- Launched in: Dec. 2004
- Location: Atacora-Donga region [northwest part of the country], sites in Natitingou and Tangueta
- 3 drug dispensaries
- 9 prescribing physicians
- 308 ARV treatments begun in March 2006

Since its creation, SOLTHIS has launched 4 programs in:

- **Mali** (Segou), December 2003,
- **Niger** (Niamey), October 2004,
- **Benin** (Atacora-Donga), January 2005,
- **Madagascar** (Antananarivo – Diego Suarez), May 2006,
- **Chad**: PMTCT program planned for T4 2006.

⇒ More than 2200 patients benefited from ARV treatment (within the framework of national initiatives).



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Training

More than 800 health workers have received training

Grassroot training

HAART Prescription
Pharmacy
Opportunistic infections and Tuberculosis
Dermatology and HIV
Drugs management and stocking
Biology: immunology, virology, parasitological, bacteriology...
Adherence

Guest health workers in French hospitals
10 since 2005

University courses:

DU de Ouagadougou
IMEA: Cours Fournier
EACS

Participation in international conferences
Bruxelles, Abuja, Paris

Participation in national conferences
"Journées VIH": Niamey and Bamako

Lessons learned: SOLTHIS' approach has set up the conditions for a better care to HIV/AIDS patients and has enhanced **capacity building**:

- **Application of WHO recommendations and use of simplified ARV treatment regimens (FCD).**
- **80%** of all patients are receiving a first-line treatment.
- More than **800 medical workers were trained** to ARV prescription and adherence.
- Assessment and follow-up tools will be implemented for evaluation purposes.

Recommendations: Cause it's time to deliver,

⇒ **Being on the field** close to those who need assistance enables to **bridge the gap between funders and local stakeholders.**