

HEALTH ISSUES

INFECTIOUS AND EMERGING DISEASES

HIV

Despite significant progress, the context for HIV remains a concern in West and Central Africa. Many countries with fragile health systems are affected by conflict, humanitarian crises and climate change. In 2022, it was estimated that 82% of adults living with HIV knew their status, 78% of them had access to ARV treatment and 71% had an undetectable viral load.

The context for children and adolescents living with HIV remains dire, with only 37% knowing their status and accessing ARV treatment. In 2023, 160,000 new infections were recorded, representing 12% of new infections worldwide. Although the number of new infections has fallen by 43% since 2010, this decline has been much faster for men (49%) than for women (38%).

Women and girls account for 43% of new infections and poor sexual and reproductive health services contribute to the disproportionate burden the epidemic places on them. The coverage of programs for the prevention of vertical HIV transmission increased from 29% in 2010 to 53% in 2022, but has stagnated since 2016. The region is home to 20% of pregnant women living with HIV worldwide, but accounts for 52% of all pregnant women living with HIV who are not on treatment.

In addition, key populations, along with their partners and clients, account for 74% of new infections and fuel new infections due to challenges accessing care caused by stigma and, in some countries, criminalization.



18 people
infected with HIV every day
in West and Central Africa
(UNAIDS, 2021)



5 million
people are living with HIV
in West and Central Africa
(UNAIDS, 2021)

NFM3 PROJECT

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In 2023, **543 capacity strengthening activities** were implemented to support health facility performance and quality of care: **462 mentoring sessions** involving **770 participants**, **77 on-site trainings** reaching **285 participants** and **4 classroom-based trainings** reaching **231 participants**.

The project also **developed a comprehensive tool to monitor and evaluate the performance of health centers, to contribute to the analysis of national health information and to guide decision-making.** The health center performance dashboard covers **six areas (mother-to-child transmission/early infant diagnosis, linkage to care, retention in care, viral load, procurement and supply management and health information system)** by **assessing 10 key performance indicators.** The results are encouraging with an average score of 77% among the 35 supported health centers and 7/10 key indicators with a score above 80%. Challenges and gaps are observed with regard to laboratory analyses of early infant diagnosis and viral load tests, the availability of commodity supplies and the scale up of ARV distribution over several months.

To improve performance on the UNAIDS third 95¹, Solthis **developed a viral load (VL) monitoring tool to support and boost VL testing in supported health facilities.** In 2023, this tool enabled health facilities to collect and send 4,196 VL samples, but only 2,010 results were received from the national laboratory (due to equipment failure). 1,897 of these patients were virally suppressed (98.8%), which is an excellent result.




I appreciate Solthis' innovative and continued interventions on HIV and their efforts to strengthen the capacity of health professionals, more than any other partner we have worked with. They have significantly improved the skills of health workers in patient care in terms of HIV testing services, treatment, documentation and retention in care. The health district should use Solthis trained professionals for peer learning in other facilities.


Milicent Minah, Manager at the National AIDS Control, Program (NACP) within the Port Loko District Health Management Team (DHMT).




Sierra Leone

KEY INFO

 **Duration:** 2 years
(July 2022 - June 2024)

 **Funding:** Global Fund

 **Partners:** National Aids Control Program (NACP), District health management team (DHMT)

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5,222
recipients of care



35
health institutions




1,286
participants involved
in project capacity
strengthening
activities


NFM3 PROJECT


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KEY INFO

 **Duration:** 3 years
(January 2021 - December 2023)

 **Funding:** Global Fund

 **Partners:** Sectoral Unit for the Control of AIDS, Tuberculosis and Viral Hepatitis/ Ministry of Health and Social Development (CSLS TBH/MSDS). 4 regional health directorates (Bamako, Kayes, Koulikoro and Sikasso); 31 HIV management sites.

 [Find out more](#)

Solthis is the provider selected by the Ministry of Health to support implementation of NFM3 (New Funding Model 3) to accelerate meeting the 95-95-95 targets. This led to **our involvement in strengthening health systems in terms of comprehensive HIV-related services, including diagnosis, patient initiation to recommended antiretroviral treatment, patient follow-up, management of HIV/tuberculosis co-infection, the prevention of mother-to-child transmission strategy, through review workshops, coaching, supervision and evaluation.**

In order to support the improvement of services for people living with HIV (PLHIV), **35 integrated coaching visits at the regional level and 3 exceptional coaching visits** from the national level to the sites were carried out. Nearly **180 service providers benefited from this support in 2023.** This support contributed to **76,600 provider-initiated tests** being carried out, **antiretroviral treatment initiation for 5,000 PLHIV and more than 12,000 viral load tests** being carried out, 71% of which are undetectable.



98
coaches trained



Nearly
50,000
PLHIV on ART
monitored at the 31
partner sites



4,200
PLHIV received
TB preventive
therapy



I am really happy with the collaboration, particularly in terms of improving the quality of data at our various sites and building staff capacity.
Bamako regional health department HIV focal point.



PROSSAN II PROJECT

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In 2023, project activities focused on three key areas:

► **Mid-term evaluation of the quality of care and services for HIV testing/ counselling and HIV testing / prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) in health facilities supported by the PROSSAN 2 project.**

The results of the quality of care score (13 indicators evaluated) are encouraging, with 60% of the 10 health facilities achieving a score of over 75% (baseline score of 40%, target of 80% at the end of the evaluation).



The score for HIV testing/ counselling and HIV testing/ PMTCT services (7 indicators assessed) was also encouraging, with 40% of health centers scoring above 70% (baseline score of 0%, target of 75%).

► **training 20 health workers on the management of TB/HIV co-infection**, targeting staff working in TB response units.

► **mentoring to improve skills and knowledge around changes in HIV management and patient monitoring, and ensuring effective documentation and reporting.**

Routine activity where each site is visited at least once a month. The objective is to mentor HIV counsellors on various topics, such as patient monitoring, effective documentation, quality and timeliness of reporting and how to use national HIV tools, among others. Thirty-six mentoring visits took place in the 10 supported health facilities and 56 health workers were mentored.

“ During the joint monthly mentorship I conducted with Solthis, with health workers working in antenatal and delivery care services, I acquired stronger knowledge on PMTCT. This knowledge helped me to carry out my day-to-day mentoring activities with nurses and midwives in health facilities. I can now contribute in a positive way to preventing mother to child transmission. **Alimatu Bah, mentor midwife, Action Against Hunger Sierra Leone.** ”

KEY INFO

Duration: 2 years
(May 2022 - July 2024)

Funding: AFD

Partners: Partners: Action Against Hunger (AAH), Community Association for Psychosocial Service (CAPS) and Community Action for the Welfare of Children (CaWeC)

[Find out more](#)



10
health facilities



357
health workers



1,428
patients provided
with care in
10 health facilities

SHARE PROJECT

Sharing HIV actions, results and experiences to support decision-making

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The SHARE project began in the second half of 2023, with the **objective of contributing to the HIV response in the country through the creation, documentation, dissemination and advocacy around adoption /adaptation and use of knowledge taken from the experiences of previous projects** implemented by Solthis in the delivery of HIV-related services and strengthening of health systems at health facility and community levels.

The main project start-up activities related **to laying foundations for implementation, through finalizing and signing the partnership agreement between Solthis and the Network of HIV Positives in Sierra Leone (NETHIPS)**, who are a member of the project implementation consortium. Knowledge management themes were also selected, through consultations between NETHIPS, Solthis staff, national authorities and health facility workers.

“*NETHIPS is happy to be working with Solthis again to generate and disseminate knowledge on how to increase community support for beneficiaries of care.*”
Idrissa Songo, Executive Director, NETHIPS Sierra Leone.

KEY INFO

 **Duration:** 24 months
(July 2023 to June 2025)

 **Funding:** AFD

 **Partners:** NETHIPS, National Aids Control Program (NACP)

 [Find out more](#)



35
health facilities



200
health workers

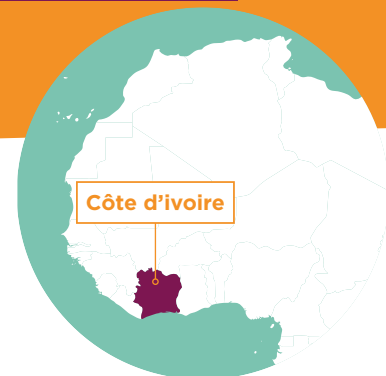


900
PLHIV participated in project activities

TPE-ADVIH PROJECT

Technical assistance for the national scale up of HIV self-testing in Côte d'Ivoire





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The TPE-ADVIH project started up at the end of 2023 and was officially launched in December. It aims to support the scale up of HIV self-testing (HIVST - ADVIH in French), which was introduced in Côte d'Ivoire under the ATLAS project. The main interventions focused on developing a partnership agreement with the National AIDS Control Program (NACP) and a dashboard of key performance indicators for technical assistance. The expected results of the project are:

- ▶ **improved differentiated testing provision through self-testing**, to positively contribute to national HIV targets;
- ▶ **increased access to free self-testing for priority populations across the country**, and the availability of a mechanism to support linkages to confirmatory tests and access to care;
- ▶ **guaranteed availability of self-testing for the general population at an affordable price and of reliable quality in private pharmacies**, and communications mechanism in place to link people to treatment.

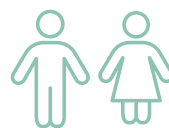
KEY INFO

-  **Duration:** 2 years
(October 2023 to September 2025)
-  **Funding:** FID
-  **Partners:** NACP
-  [Find out more](#)

Number of expected beneficiaries:



150,000
people from key
populations
aged 15+ and their
networks



360,000
sexual partners
of PLHIV



Sexual partners of
patients coming for
STI consultations
(almost
400,000
consultations
annually)



This technical assistance is timely, in a context where there was a decline in HIV self-tests being distributed from mid-2022 and during 2023, and where there are opportunities to expand provision in the private sector.

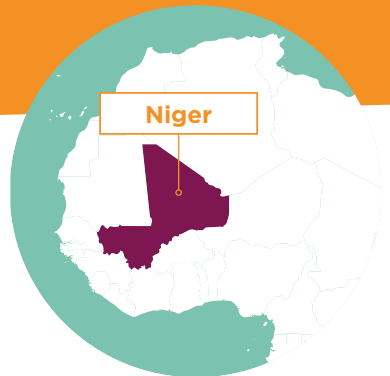
Sandra Ouegang Fonkui, project coordinator.



LABO 2S PROJECT

Laboratories serving health in Niger

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The Labo2S project aimed to strengthen the capacity of laboratories and sample transportation networks, as well as the capacities of care providers and patient associations to promote access to examinations and ensure care providers are carrying them out effectively. In 2023, the project delivered on-site mentoring sessions and multidisciplinary meetings of caregivers both on-site and between care sites. Project results were also assessed in terms of improving care for people living with HIV (PLHIV) in order to return them to caregivers, health authorities and partners.

In 2023, **more than 82% of PLHIV** in Niamey sites and **84% in Dosso sites benefited from access to HIV viral load testing**, compared to only 28% of people in Niamey and 38% in Dosso having access in 2021.

81% of people living with HIV with high viral loads in Niamey and 86% in Dosso received enhanced adherence support and viral load checks, compared to only 22% of people in Niamey and 0% in Dosso in 2021. **This resulted in a 90% increase in second-line treatment compared to 2021.**



Mothers are very keen to know the HIV status of their babies once they are 6 weeks old and this has been made possible at some PMTCT sites through the implementation of the Labo 2S project.

Representative of RENIP+, project partner.



KEY INFO



Duration: 4 years
(May 2019 - June 2023)



Funding: L'Initiative (Expertise France), Paris City Hall



Partners : Mériex Foundation, Ministry of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs of Niger (MSP/P/AS), Nigerien network of people living with HIV/AIDS (RENIP+), Nigerien association of cured TB patients (ANIMAG-TB)



[Find out more](#)



More than **200** care providers benefited from **322** mentoring sessions and **49** multidisciplinary meetings.



100% of PLHIV and suspected tuberculosis patients received a **GeneXpert** diagnostic test (+49% compared to 2021).

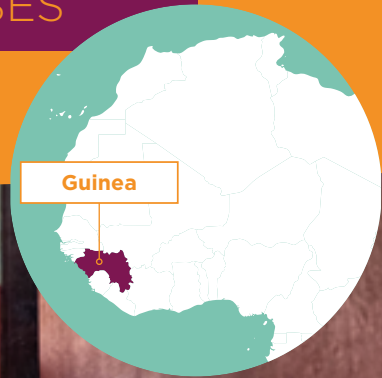


66% of exposed infants received an **early HIV diagnosis** (compared to 19% in 2021).

RUCHE PROJECT

Placing users at the center of the fight against HIV

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KEY INFO



Duration: 3 years



Financing: AFD



Partners: AFD, UNITAID, Paris City Hall, Caritas Foundation



[Find out more](#)



80

patients directly involved in empowerment activities.



23

psychosocial assistants with strengthened capacity of which **14** taken it further, in terms of taking ownership of the methodologies.



13

people independent to the delivery of analysis groups on professional practices delivered 39 sessions.

A highly participatory, inclusive intervention strategy, which was adapted to each health facility and each target group (from defining to assessing needs) was put in place and allowed all stakeholders (institutional actors, caregivers, parents and CSOs) to agree on a model of patient-centered care.

Respect for the health rights of PLHIV has been substantially improved by strengthening the capacities of local health actors, promoting the involvement of PLHIV, strengthening health systems and integrating capacity strengthening of CSOs.

Two CSOs have been strengthened in terms of structuring and managing their work (FEG around psychosocial assistants & Collectif around advocacy). At the end of the project, **2 learning and sharing documents, 2 tools for psychosocial assistants and a transition plan** were developed and printed.



Thanks to this project, I am now able to discuss my situation with my doctor without fear. Before this project, I found it impossible to discuss my care with my doctor.

Patient involved in the RUCHE project.



IMPULSE PROJECT

Empowering healthcare systems by involving users

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The IMPULSE project, which focused on user rights, mentoring and patient experience, started at the end of 2023. **The initial activities involved a methodological framework for the roll out of Solthis' capacity strengthening strategy to ensure provision of user-centered care and jointly identifying sites based on defined needs.**

For beneficiaries (PLHIV, health care teams, psycho-social support workers, associative and civil society actors, representatives of health authorities), **the expected results of this project are to improve governance around integrating users to take into account the patient experience, to strengthen patient support services and to improve professional relational practice.**

“ *Establishing dialogue between patients and care providers to develop a shared vision of the quality of care and how to improve it.* **Harouna Mamane, IMPULSE project coordinator.** ”

KEY INFO

 **Duration:** 4 years (in 2 stages)

 **Financing:** AFD

 **Partners:** Ministry of Health (DNEHPP, SNPS, PNLSH), UGANC, CSO (FEG + Collectif)

 [Find out more](#)



4
target sites in
Conakry and



2
in Boké, working
at several different
levels of the health
pyramid

TA-DSD PROJECT

Technical assistance for
appropriate HIV care services

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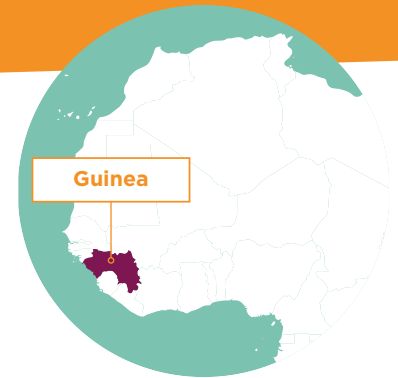


Technical assistance (TA) on differentiated service delivery aimed **to improve testing methods for key populations in adapted facilities and community centers, in particular through the roll out of HIV self-testing.**


The TA also related to getting adapted care recognized in community centers at the national level. In addition to focusing on key populations, **the TA assessed issues around support to access care and contributed to developing a strategic framework to improve indicators relating to the first and second 95s.**


In 2023, effective distribution of HIV self-tests in 4 centers was evaluated and led to testing approaches being adapted and scaled up in 21 additional sites. In total, between mid-November 2022 and August 2023, 7,362 kits were distributed.


Scale-up also provided an opportunity to train distribution officers and supervisors (participation in the Labé, Kankan and N'Zérékoré regions), which was provided to 113 sex worker peer educators (PEs), 107 men who have sex with men PEs, 7 people who inject drugs PEs, 42 health providers and 17 supervisors. In parallel, Solthis participated in the development of the national HIV self-testing guidelines, standards and procedures document in Guinea.



KEY INFO

 **Duration:** 30 months
(July 2021 - December 2023)

 **Funding:** Global Fund

 **Partners:** PNLISH, Plan International Guinea, the various sub-recipients of the co-PR managing the community component (Health Focus, AGBEF, IOM, Child Fund and AJP), FMG.

 [Find out more](#)



7,362
HIV self-test kits
distributed



227
peer educators
trained



42
health providers
trained



HIV self-testing has enabled us to reach people who have never been tested before but are in a high-risk environment for HIV. Some people were positive and did not know it since they had never been tested.

EIC, doctor, Dixinn.

