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## PROJECT EMPOWER II

# EMPOWERING USERS FOR QUALITY HIV CARE

With an HIV prevalence of 1.7%, Sierra Leone faces a number of challenges to achieving the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets. Stigma and discrimination remain significant barriers and prevent people from knowing their status and following their treatment. Furthermore, the quality of care is still a major problem in keeping patients in care. Phase I (2016-2019) of the project enabled Solthis to mobilise patients and health professionals, to engage in a constructive dialogue and capacity building process. The unique feature of the project is the simultaneous strengthening of demand for and provision of healthcare services as a key to success. Indeed, in the course of the 3 years period, Solthis deployed a three-pronged approach to build and strengthen capacities, in healthcare facilities and within communities, through training and mentoring of health workers and of members and leaders of patients' Support Groups. Owing to the significant involvement of national stakeholders, the project has not only improved the quality of HIV care in the 13 supported health facilities, but it has also enabled many patients to claim their right to quality health services which meet their needs.

### Key Information



**Project duration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase:**  
3 years (2019 – 2022)



**Beneficiaries:** 20 health facilities supported



**Source of funding:** AFD and Marie de Paris



**Partners:** NETHIPS (Network of HIV Positives in Sierra Leone), National Aids Secretariat (NAS), National HIV/AIDS Control Program (NACP)



**Intervention areas:** Western Urban Area, Western Rural Area and Port Loko District

## OBJECTIVES

Contribute to the reinforcement of civil society in exercising the right to health in Sierra Leone.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Empower Project aims to improve the quality of care through an approach focused on the needs of people living with HIV in three districts of Sierra Leone. The project continues supporting NETHIPS through two channels, by building the capacity of Support Groups for people living with HIV/Aids to defend their right to quality healthcare and to fight against stigma and discrimination. Also, the Project strengthens the organizational capacity of NETHIPS so that the Network can continue to position itself as a key player in the fight against HIV in Sierra Leone. To do so, an Organizational Capacity Assessment has been done, which identified needs and the most appropriate support that Solthis will provide throughout the project.

In the 20 supported health facilities, Solthis medical team continues providing ongoing clinical mentoring, on-site and classroom training, and supportive supervisions to health care workers in order to strengthen their capacity to deliver quality of HIV care and management. In addition, Solthis is working closely with NAS and NACP and provides technical support on updating and developing national guidelines and training manuals.

*« The Empower project has completely changed our way of life. »*

MEMBER OF SUPPORT GROUP

## EXPECTED RESULTS

-  The capacities of people living with HIV to exercise and defend their right to health are reinforced
-  The capacity of healthcare workers to provide good-quality care is strengthened
-  The national environment and institutional capacities to ensure the sustainability of project results are reinforced

