

## HEALTH ISSUES

# SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and to rights being fully respected remains a major challenge today. Women in particular continue to face significant difficulties to freely make choices about their own bodies. Vulnerable and marginalized groups face many barriers to accessing quality care. Although there have been positive developments in West Africa, the region is now experiencing slowdown in the progress made so far. The region accounts for a significant proportion of maternal deaths on the continent<sup>1</sup>. Pregnancies among girls under the age of 15 are also most widespread in West Africa<sup>2</sup>, which exposes them to serious complications. Young girls are 20% more likely to become pregnant during adolescence<sup>3</sup>. The region also has the highest rate of unmet contraception needs among adolescents<sup>4</sup>. Yet, implementation of comprehensive sexuality education programs faces strong resistance. Finally, the threat of gender-based violence continues to impact life pathways, reflecting deep social inequalities.

In 2023, Solthis produced a report entitled «*Towards a Feminist Approach to Care: Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for All*», which outlines the organization's commitments to more inclusive care. The feminist approach to care we advocate reflects the approaches used by Solthis and its partners in the field, and is structured around three areas:

1. strengthening women's empowerment, promoting self-care and taking back ownership of their bodies;
2. integrating the fight against sexual and gender-based violence into all interventions: prevention, harm reduction and response;
3. people-centered services, especially for women, taking into account their specific needs.




## 43 %

of new HIV infections in WCA occur among women and young girls.


In WCA, more than 10% of girls aged 15 to 19 already have children.

 For further information:




 [Solthis' positioning and strategy on sexual and reproductive health](#)



 [Solthis' gender positioning and strategy](#)



 [Feminist approach to care commitments report](#)

<sup>1</sup> WHO 2020

<sup>2</sup> UNFPA 2023

<sup>3</sup> World Bank 2023

<sup>4</sup> Guttmacher 2021

# POUVOIR PROJECT

Improved sexual and reproductive health  
and rights of cisgender and trans sex workers

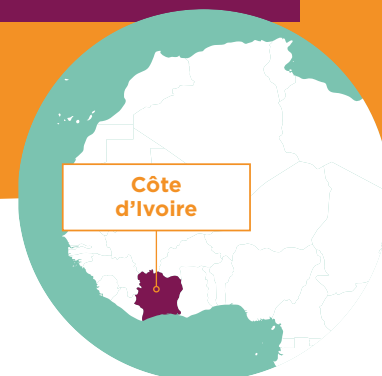
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The POUVOIR project aims to improve care and remove barriers to accessing SRH services for cisgender and trans sex workers (SWs). During 2023, several activities were carried out with a view to achieving this objective:

- ▶ in partnership with Médecins du Monde, Solthis conducted **advanced cervical cancer screening activities through training 10 peer educators (PEs)** who sensitized 442 SWs (292 did HPV self-swabs);
- ▶ **the establishment of self-gynecology workshops** has made it possible to strengthen SW empowerment;
- ▶ **a discussion workshop on perceptions, norms and attitudes** was organized in June 2023 **with the aim of getting health workers to take into account the specific SRH needs of key populations, to question their own perceptions and values in order to promote a non-discriminatory, non-judgmental and more welcoming approach;**
- ▶ **capacity strengthening interventions have improved the knowledge of care providers to ensure inclusive care that takes into account the specific needs of key populations;**
- ▶ **refurbishing and equipping the Espace Confiance and Arc-en-ciel+ emergency accommodation centers has made it possible to increase their accommodation capacities.**

“ I understand that our personal opinions should not prevent us from doing our job to save lives.  
**Healthcare provider participating in the values clarification workshop.** ”



## KEY INFO



**Duration:** 3 years  
(April 2022 - June 2025)



**Funding:** Expertise France / L'Initiative, Paris City Hall, L'Oréal Fund for Women



**Partners:** Covie, Arc-En-Ciel +, Espace Confiance, PACCI, Directorate of Maternal and Child Health, National AIDS Control Program



[Find out more](#)



**77%**  
of cisgender and trans SWs felt a greater sense of empowerment, following the self-gynaecology workshops.



**2,293**  
SWs sensitized on SRHR issues.



**30**  
health workers trained on SRH issues.



**6** public health facilities and  
**2** drop in centers supported.

# C'EST LA VIE ! PROJECT

PHASE 2

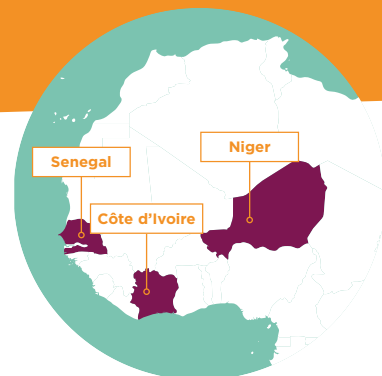
## Adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health in West Africa

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The C'est la Vie 2 project aims to support the adoption of safer and more respectful behaviors around SRHR and gender among adolescents and young people, by strengthening their capacity to make choices and take action. In this regard, in 2023, Solthis implemented the below:

- ▶ participation of Solthis teams in joint **preparatory visits with RAES to gather information and hold introductions with the local authorities in the 3 countries** (Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger);
- ▶ **discussion workshops held** in Niger and Côte d'Ivoire **on perceptions, norms and attitudes around SRHR issues** (64 participants, including 52 women);
- ▶ **facilitation of a regional experience-sharing workshop** with RAES on methodologies and thematic areas for skills development for health professionals;
- ▶ **joint coaching / mentoring visit in Côte d'Ivoire with the health authorities around meeting the needs of adolescents and young people** in 12 health centers, which strengthened the capacity of 31 health professionals (including 23 women);
- ▶ **3 participatory diagnostic workshops on the quality of SRH services for adolescents and young people** in Niger in targeted facilities (including school nurses' offices), followed by 2 reporting back workshops with a total of 39 participants;
- ▶ **two training of trainer sessions** in Senegal for health authorities (23 participants).



### KEY INFO



#### Duration:

February 2023 – June 2026



**Funding:** AFD



**Partners:** RAES (lead), Equipop, Ratanga Club CSO, Alliance Droit et Santé, UCPO



[Find out more](#)



**79**  
health professionals  
received training,  
mentoring or  
coaching



**97%**  
of health and  
community actors  
increased their  
knowledge of SRH  
and gender

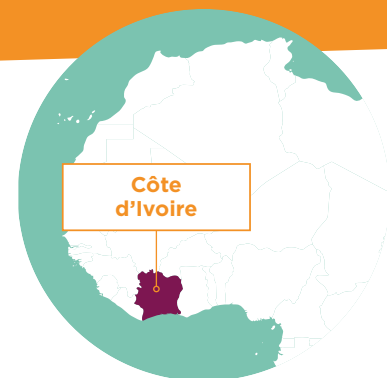


**1**  
protocol on GBV  
management  
in Senegal

# AGIR PROJECT

Empowering young people and adolescents around SRHR

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## KEY INFO



**Duration:** 3 years  
(March 2022 - February 2025)



**Funding:** AFD, Bank of Africa Foundation



**Partners:** ASAPSU, Espace Con fiance, National AIDS Control Program (NACP), National Program for Maternal and Child Health (PNSME), National Program for School and University Health - Health, Adolescents and Youth (PNSSU-SAJ)



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To help improve care and remove barriers to accessing SRH services, the AGIR project worked to strengthen the empowerment of adolescents and young people and the health system.

During 2023, several activities were carried out both with adolescents / young people and health centers:

- **technical platform of 11 public and community health centers strengthened through the provision of medical equipment and supplies** with a view to improving or expanding the SRH service package;
- **empowerment workshops with adolescents and young people** that strengthened their capacity around informed decision-making in relation to their sexual and reproductive health;
- **outreach strategy awareness-raising activities carried out by 48 community actors** (30 community health workers [CHWs] and 18 peer educators [PEs]) trained on SRHR issues and community facilitation techniques with their peers in the project health regions;
- development and implementation, in collaboration with civil society partners (the NGO Messi and the youth ambassadors network), of **an advocacy plan** to promote a more favorable social and political environment for SRHR for adolescents and young people.



**19,280**  
adolescents and  
young people  
sensitized on SRHR  
issues



**18** PEs and  
**30** CHWs  
trained on SRHR  
issues



**100%**  
of supported health  
facilities have  
improved the qua-  
lity of SRH service  
provision adapted  
to adolescents and  
young people

# LAHIYATA PROJECT

Improving access to sexual and reproductive health and rights



As part of the continuity of the JADES 1 and JADES 2 projects, the Lahiyata project aims to strengthen the empowerment of adolescents and young people around SRHR and their access to comprehensive, quality SRH services adapted to their specific needs. In this sense, activities during the first year included:

- **exchange workshops on perceptions were developed and implemented for transformative purposes.**

Health professionals are supported to assess the perceptions they hold, to be more aware of the importance of the interpersonal aspect of providing adolescent-friendly care and potential interference of their own attitudes and values and their ability to provide care adapted to their needs.

- **participatory assessments and support to facilities carried out**

Results of the participatory assessment of the provision of services and the evaluation of the baseline score for health facilities respectively highlighted:

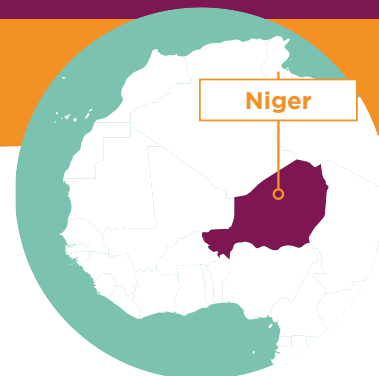
- **the need to refurbish and better equip health facilities to ensure better care for adolescents and young people;**
- **the availability of equipment, supplies and consultations was more or less satisfactory.**

In order to respond to these findings, the project moved ahead with procuring and donating medico-technical equipment for all the target integrated health centers and youth action centers in Maradi and Niamey.


- **community assessment and implementation of activities for young people and their friends and family**

Community assessments on the needs of adolescents in school clubs were carried out to identify socio-cultural, political and economic needs and barriers in terms of access that adolescents and young people have to comprehensive and quality SRH services, with a view to best adapting the project's activities focused on the demand for care and strengthening adolescents and young people to take action.

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## KEY INFO

 **Duration:** 3 years  
(February 2023 - March 2026)

 **Funding:** Expertise France / L'Initiative

 **Partners:** Lafia Matassa

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**50**  
**people** (midwives, nurses and mentors from Lafia Matassa), including 42 women, **trained as part of the perceptions workshops**



**36**  
**young leaders** **trained to carry out** awareness-raising activities with their peers



**52**  
**participants at** **intergenerational workshops**



*I am very happy that the project has decided to work in our health region. Having these materials meets our needs because we can now set up a dedicated care unit for adolescents.*  
**Manager of the Place du Chef integrated health center.**



# SANSAS PROJECT

Adolescent and youth reproductive health in Senegal

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The SANSAS project aims **to improve access to reproductive health rights for young people and adolescents in Senegal, particularly young girls, young women and vulnerable youth.** In this sense, the key interventions and results in 2023 were:

- ▶ **increase in quality** score in all supported health facilities;
- ▶ **provision of adolescent and youth SRH medical equipment** to the 30 health facilities supported;
- ▶ **skills development interventions with caregivers on post-abortion care, long-acting contraceptive methods, gender-based violence (GBV) and self-care (injectable contraceptive: Saynana Press®);**
- ▶ **1 SANSAS summer camp organized to strengthen adolescent and youth empowerment for 70 young people** (44 girls and 26 young men);
- ▶ **3 advocacy plans developed by young people:** national plan for the integration of young people into the reproductive, maternal, neonatal, infant, child and adolescent health and nutrition steering committee; pregnancies in schools; access for adolescents and young people to quality health services adapted to their needs;
- ▶ **development of a knowledge transfer plan designed for members of the consortium,** local, national and even international actors working on adolescent and youth SRH.

“*The Sansas project helped us both personally and at community level to be able to and to have a sense of team spirit... The activities and training provided have made me more self-confident, which will be beneficial throughout my life.*

**Coumba Aw, youth leader in Sédhiou (aged 20).**

## KEY INFO



**Duration:** 4.5 years  
(February 2021 - October 2025)



**Funding:** AFD, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation via AFD, L'Oréal Fund for Women, Bank of Africa Foundation, C'est la Vie 2 (AFD)



**Partners:** Enda Santé, EquiPop, RAES, LARTES



[Find out more](#)



**75.5%**  
**quality score in supported facilities**  
(compared to 62.1%)



**69,288**  
**consultations**  
carried out at health facility level



**291**  
**mobile clinic outings**

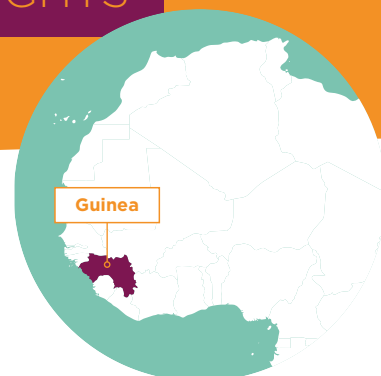


**83**  
**digital communication content pieces**  
created by and for adolescents and young people

# PAJES PROJECT

Empowering organizations and young people committed to promoting sexual health

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In 2023, **16 capacity strengthening sessions were organized on various themes, such as project management, monitoring and evaluation and advocacy techniques.** More than 8,000 adolescents and young people benefited from awareness raising interventions carried out by the Coalition; more than 20,000 people learned about SRHR through the Génération qui Ose platform, formed by Ablogui. During the same period, Ablogui began developing an app to promote SRHR.

One of the major achievements this year was a **study to measure numbers of unintended pregnancies in schools.** The results showed that 21% of female students were pregnant between 2021 and 2023, 73% of them were unintended pregnancies. The study highlights that different forms of gender-based violence influence rates of unintended pregnancy, such as intimate partner violence (19% of female students surveyed), including husbands for young married women. This refers to controlling or forceful behavior that interfere with a woman's autonomy to make reproductive choices (of the students surveyed, 77% were or had become pregnant with their husband); this proportion was higher in Nzérékoré (100%), followed by Kankan (76%), and Kindia (71%).

Finally, a most significant change (MSC) study was carried out throughout the year with **the main results showing greater power to take action among individuals, particularly in terms of technical skills, brought about through training and by a context favorable for collaboration between the different PAJES project partners.**



## KEY INFO



**Duration:** 3 years



**Funding :** Expertise France and Paris City Hall



**Parteners:** CSO/FP Coalition; Ablogui; PNLSh; DNSFN



[Find out more](#)



**8,000+**  
adolescents and  
young people sensi-  
tized on unintended  
pregnancies, family  
planning, STIs and  
HIV and GBV



**20,000+**  
people received  
information through  
the GquiOse plat-  
form



**1** advocacy plan  
was developed on  
free access to  
contraceptives and  
the rights of vulne-  
rable people



*Before, it was hard to take action because, even though we were aware of the risks that adolescents and young people face in terms of SRHR, we were powerless in terms of developing a project and identifying and stopping GBV, which girls and women are victims of. Now I feel well equipped and I'm proud to assert myself to talk about SRHR in relevant spaces. It has allowed me to have confidence in myself on an individual level.*

**Youth beneficiary.**



