

FINAL EVALUATION



# EVALUATION OVERVIEW

## PROMOTING ACCESS TO QUALITY HIV TESTING FOR KEY POPULATIONS THROUGH COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS

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Evaluation date: July - September 2022

### Key project data

- **Country:** Mauritania
- **Budget:** €284,350
- **Lead organization:** SOS Pairs éducateurs
- **Start date:** 01/10/2019  
**End date:** 01/09/2022
- **Partners:** Association pour les gestionnaires du développement (AGD) and 10 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from Nouakchott, Nouadhibou and Rosso

### Background

Data on the HIV epidemic in Mauritania shows as estimated prevalence of around 0.2%, which has been stable in the general population for several years. However, the epidemic is much less stable among two key population groups (female sex workers [SWs], and men who have sex with men [MSM]), with prevalence rates estimated at 9% among SWs and 23.4% among MSM, according to a bio-behavioral study conducted in 2019 and a technical information note on the triangulation of key population size estimation data in Mauritania.



### Project leads and implementation approach

SOS Pairs Educateurs (SOS PE) and Association pour les gestionnaires du développement (AGD) partnered to lead the project "Promoting access to quality HIV testing for populations through community interventions". The project, supported by L'Initiative, covered three geographical areas: Nouakchott, Nouadhibou and Rosso.



### Project objectives

#### Overall objective

Improving the quality of combination prevention, HIV and AIDS care provision and access to treatment, particularly for people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key populations in Mauritania.



#### Specific objective 1

Strengthen the general capacity and internal governance of local civil society organizations (CSOs).

#### Specific objective 2

Strengthen the capacity of local CSOs to implement non-clinical community-based HIV testing, taking a gender mainstreaming approach.

#### Specific objective 3

Improve collaboration between local health CSOs and public facilities responding to HIV and AIDS, through establishing an operational link between community-based HIV testing actors and dedicated local public health facilities (in Wilaya).

#### Specific objective 4

Strengthen the data collection system for community-based HIV testing and linkages to regional monitoring by public HIV and AIDS response facilities.

## Evaluation results



### Relevance

The project is relevant to the current response to HIV and AIDS in Mauritania. There is a concentrated epidemic among key populations, who are still discriminated against and on the fringes of the health system. Through strengthening the capacity of CSOs and community actors in their diversity, they developed interventions in the areas of awareness, prevention, testing provision and linkage to treatment.

### Effectiveness

After two and a half years of project implementation, more than 80% of the planned activities have been carried out. This is the first project of its kind in Mauritania in terms of the thematic area (non-clinical community testing) and the key population target groups. The number of SWs and MSM reach through educational talks and individual interviews show that there is significant and steady progression of the beneficiary target group for this intervention.

### Efficiency

Project management by SOS PE and their partners was efficient in the sense that it enabled adequate allocation of resources and effective programmatic implementation of the project, in accordance with financial risk management rules and in line with the relevant international standards. This is particularly important because funding allocated to CSOs in the Global Fund grant represents only 2% of total resources, despite them delivering the highest impact activities because of their ability to mobilize key populations in relation to prevention and referral to care. This observation demonstrates how needed and key the intervention funded by Expertise France was to support key groups.

### Impact

The evaluation highlighted changes in attitudes, changes in practices and improved dialogue between the various actors (organizations and the public) on key population health issues. Through the implementation of prevention and care interventions, partnership with health centers, referral of PLHIV to care facilities for access to antiretroviral treatment and biological monitoring, key populations are able to benefit from services that better adapted to their needs.

### Sustainability

By enabling neglected key populations to be taken into account and by providing intervention responses adapted to these groups, the SOS PE project proved the feasibility of non-clinical HIV testing for key populations and made it possible to integrate it into the Mauritanian AIDS, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections Response Service's national testing protocol.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluator made some recommendations for the implementation of the second phase of the project funded by L'Initiative:

- **Reassess the capacities of all project partner organizations** given their effective commitment and results achieved in implementing the first phase of the project. The evaluation also proposes that SOS PE enhances its own testing capacity as part of the CSO evaluation.
- **Promoting differentiated approaches** to address the vulnerabilities and gender-specific needs of women and men, as well as gender differences in the prevention and care pathways of key populations.
- **Establish a formal partnership between projects and the public health system**, to promote greater influence of project results on health policies and their scale up.
- **Improve integration of gender-based violence considerations in all project activities** (training, case identification, referral to case management facilities).
- **Capitalize on the positive experience** of CSOs and the beneficiaries of their services.



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