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## From Key Populations to beyond: using HIV self-testing to increasingly reach vulnerable groups in West-Africa

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# From Key Populations to beyond: using HIVST to increasingly reach vulnerable groups in West-Africa

Joseph Larmarange on behalf of ATLAS Team  
*HIV Self-Testing, What's next?* Symposium @ IAS 2021



# The importance of peripheral populations in West Africa

- › Key Populations (FSW, MSM, PWUD) are overwhelmingly infected by HIV
- › In Western & Central Africa (Unaid data 2020), new HIV infections in 2019: 42% among KP and 27% among clients of FSW and sexual partners of KP
- › Peripheral part of KP (e.g. occasional sex workers, hidden MSM...) are difficult to reach by peer educators and have less access to HIV testing
- › Modelling work by Maheu-Giroux *et al.* (JAIDS 2017), in Côte d'Ivoire, between 2005 and 2015, 44% of new HIV infections occurred between a FSW client and a non FSW partner

**It is crucial to reach peripheral and vulnerable populations beyond key populations to achieve 95-95-95 targets.**

## ATLAS project (2019-2022)

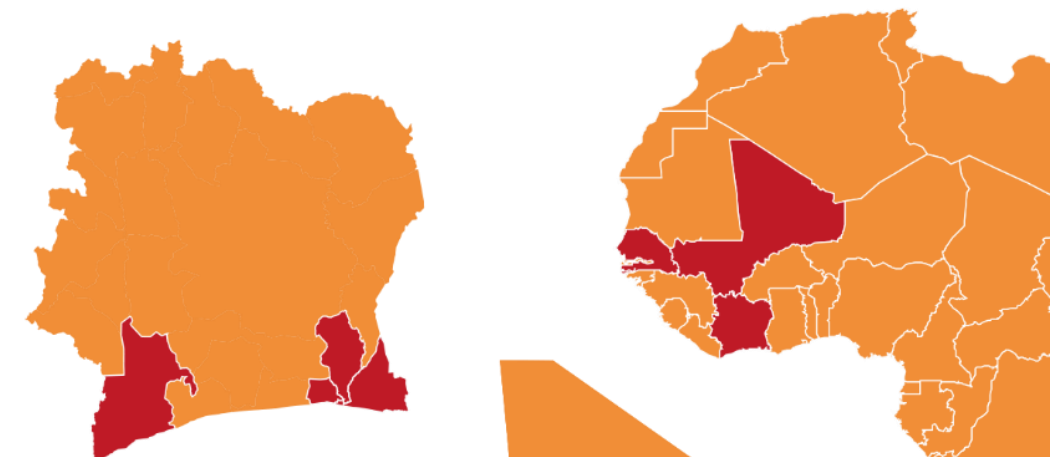
Funded by **Unitaid** (with additional funding of AFD)

Coordinated by **Solthis & IRD**

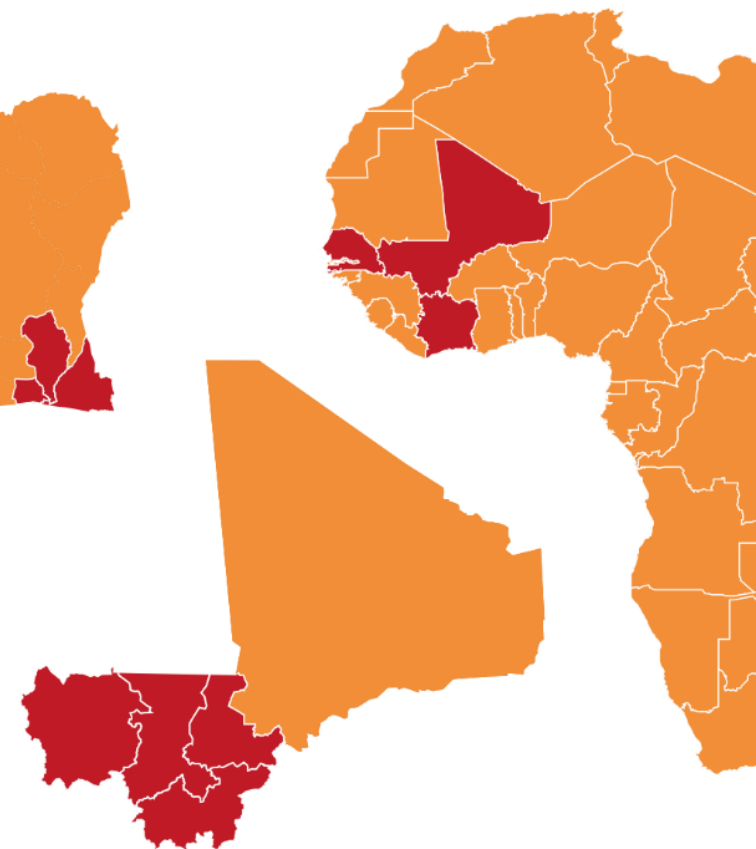
>**170** distribution sites

>**1400** agents trained for distributing HIVST

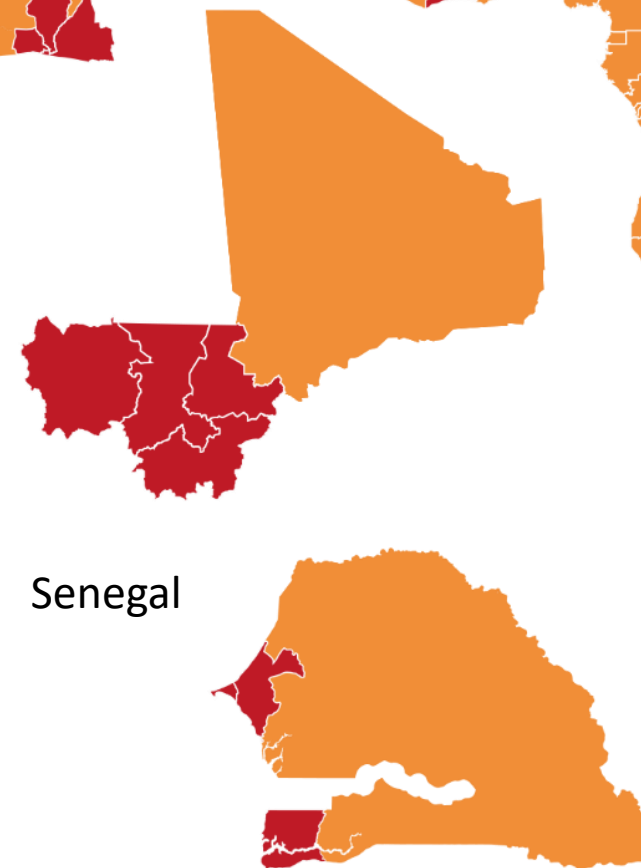
>**260 000** HIVST kits distributed since mid 2019



Côte d'Ivoire



Mali



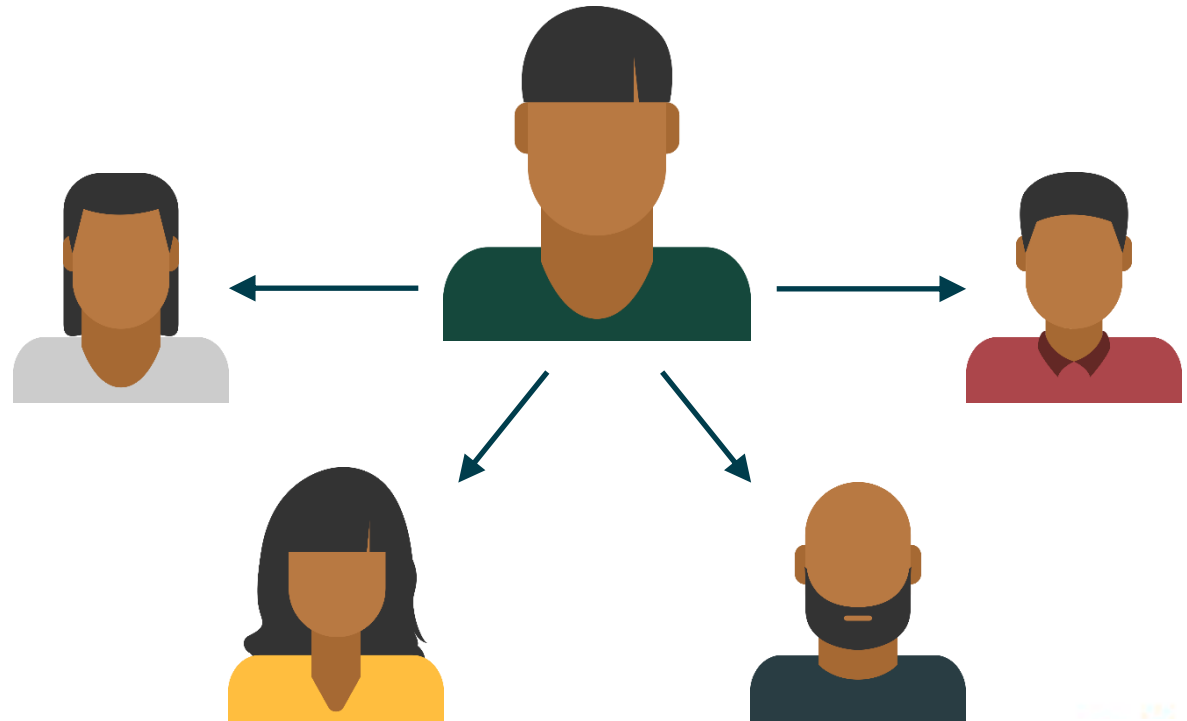
Senegal

# ATLAS self-testing distribution models

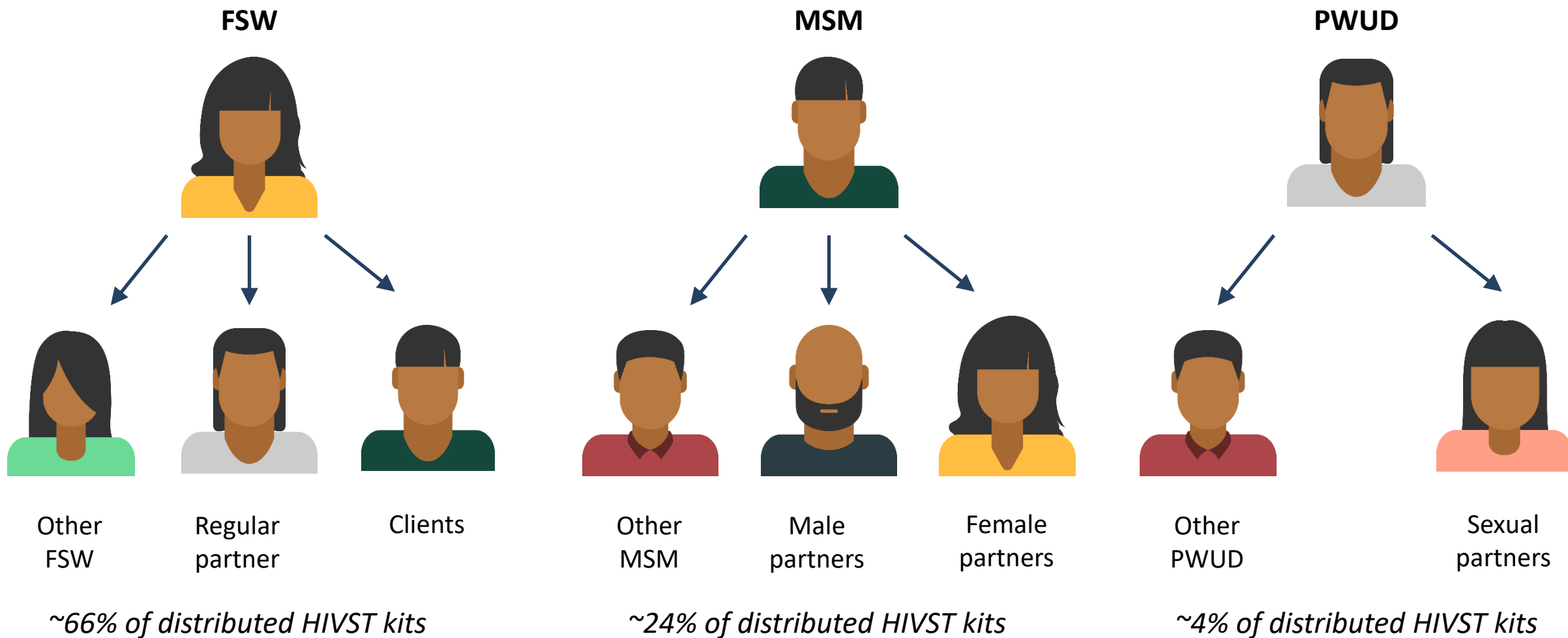
**Primary distribution**  
for personal use



**Secondary distribution**  
to be redistributed to  
partners and relatives



# ATLAS Strategy for key populations



## Secondary distribution is feasible for KP

MSM, Mali (in-depth qualitative interview)

*“Because of the self-test, I found out I was infected... Then I tested my fiancée [girlfriend] with it, but she got a non-reactive test.”*

See E-Poster PEC320 by Odette Ky-Zerbo *et al.* @ IAS 2021  
<https://theprogramme.ias2021.org/Abstract/Abstract/972>

FSW, Mali (in-depth qualitative interview)

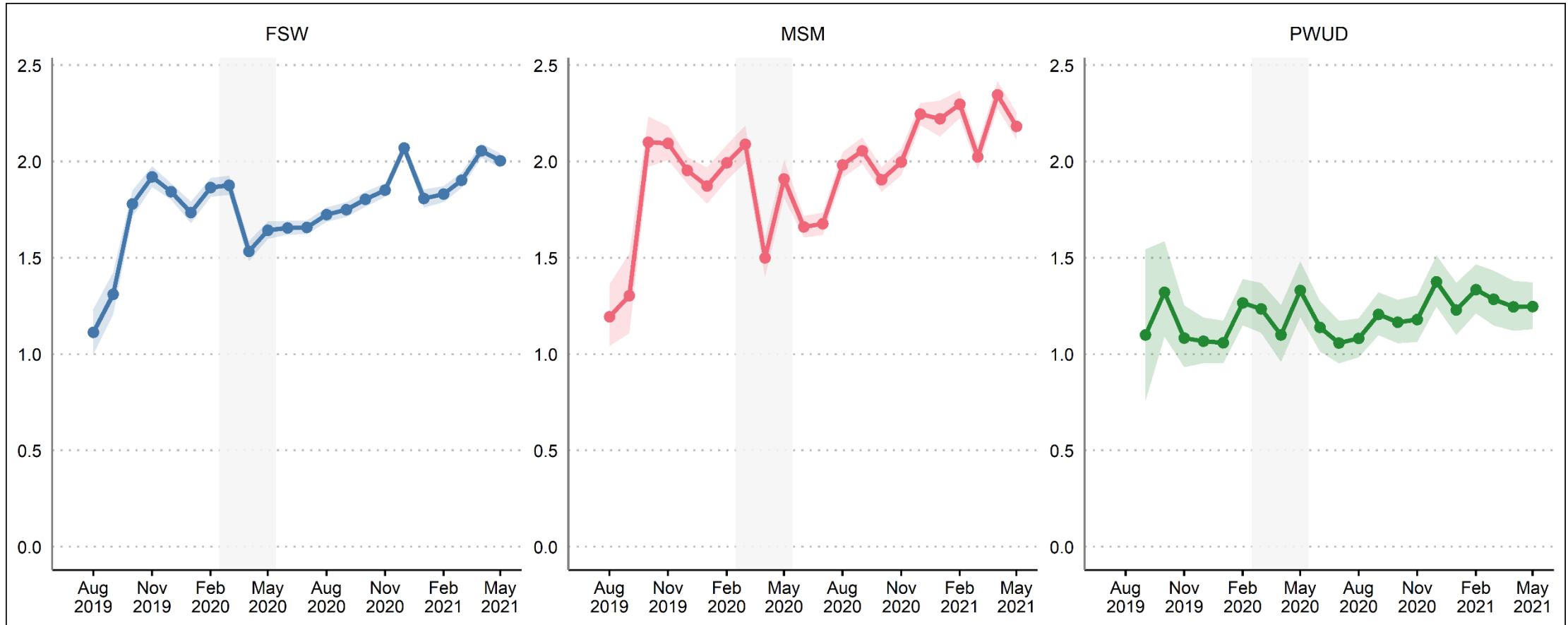
*“I also have a client who I go to in his flat [...] I gave him three [HIVST] kits, because he showed me clearly that he has another partner, so I told him that there is no problem, so he wanted that one to be tested with the self-test too.”*

**Qualitative survey among HIVST users**

Detailed results to be presented  
by Odette Ky-Zerbo @ ICASA 2021

# Increase of secondary distribution over time

Mean number of HIVST kits distributed per primary contact (outreach activities targeting KP)



**More information:** Kra Kouassi et al. "Introducing and implementing HIV self-testing in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal: what can we learn from ATLAS project activity reports in the context of the COVID-19 crisis?" *Frontiers in Public Health* (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.653565>)



# Field adaptation

## Direct distribution to secondary targets

- > Following suggestions from peer educators, they have been invited to distribute HIVST kits directly to secondary targets when relevant (for example a sexual partner of KP seen on site)
- > Other strategies have been developed, e.g. HIVST kits left at the reception of a brother/“love hotel” to be redistributed to the clients

## In the context of sanitary measures (Covid-19)

- > Relocation of activities
- > Use of social networks (Facebook, WhatsApp...)
- > Integration of hygiene measures...



The poster features the ATLAS logo at the top left, with the tagline 'Savoir est une force' and 'AutoTest VIH Libre d'Accéder à la connaissance de son Statut - SÉNÉGAL - CÔTE D'IVOIRE - MALI'. The main text reads: 'Maintien de la dispensation de l'autodépistage du VIH en contexte Covid-19 : retours d'expériences et bonnes pratiques du projet ATLAS'. Below this, there are icons for a syringe, a box, a test tube, and a virus. A central image shows a healthcare worker in a white coat and blue cap, wearing a face mask, holding a red HIVST kit. To the right, another person is seen in a white shirt and blue pants, also wearing a mask. The date 'Janvier 2021' is printed below the main text. At the bottom, the project title is 'Projet de promotion et déploiement de kits d'autodépistage du VIH Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Sénégal'. Logos for Solthis, IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement), AFD (Agence Française de Développement), and Unitaïd are displayed at the bottom.

atlas  
Savoir est une force  
AutoTest VIH Libre d'Accéder à la connaissance de son Statut  
SÉNÉGAL - CÔTE D'IVOIRE - MALI

Maintien de la dispensation de l'autodépistage du VIH en contexte Covid-19 : retours d'expériences et bonnes pratiques du projet ATLAS

Janvier 2021

Projet de promotion et déploiement de kits d'autodépistage du VIH Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Sénégal

Solthis IRD Institut de Recherche pour le Développement AFD Unitaïd

available at  
<https://atlas.solthis.org/>

## Profile of HIVST users

- › Phone survey conducted between March & June 2021
- › Survey flyers distributed with HIVST kits, inviting people to call anonymously a toll free phone number
- › 2615 participants
- › Despite some recruitment biases, 1/3 received their HIVST kit through secondary distribution (friend, sexual partner, relative...)
- › 41% were first-time testers (first HIV test in their lifetime)
- › 50% perceived themselves as not exposed at all to HIV risk
- › MSM-based channel:
  - › 1/10 of participants were female
  - › 45% of males did not report any male sexual partner (“hidden MSM”)
- › FSW-based channel:
  - › 1/2 of participants were male

**Phone survey among HIVST users**  
Detailed results to be presented  
by Arsène K Kouassi @ ICASA 2021



## To conclude...

HIV self-testing and secondary distribution is feasible and sustainable among key populations in West Africa.

Our results show that HIV self-testing is an opportunity to reach, beyond key populations, vulnerable groups who never tested before.

# PARTNERS



## Consortium



## Funding



## Technical partner



## Implementation partners

### Côte d'Ivoire

Ministère de la Santé et de l'Hygiène Publique  
PNLS



Alliance CI  
Aprosam  
Arc en Ciel  
Ariel Glaser  
Blety  
Eloé  
Espace Confiance  
Heartland Alliance  
Orasur  
Ruban Rouge

### Mali

Ministère de la Santé et des Affaires sociales  
HCNLS



AKS  
Amprode Sahel  
ARCAD Santé  
Danayaso  
FHI 360  
Plan International  
PSI  
Soutoura

### Sénégal

Ministère de la Santé et de l'Action Sociale  
CNLS



CTA  
CEPIAD  
Enda Santé

## Partner projects



## Research partners

