



*Aidemet Ong*

## Aid to the Development of the Traditional Medicine

Non-Governmental No-Profit Organization

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## Ceremony in honour of Tiémogo Bengaly, Traditional Healer.

March 13<sup>th</sup> 2008 at 11 o'clock, in the Room of Lectures of the Traditional Medicine Department (TMD) of the National Institute of Research in Public Health, at the end of a Workshop of Exchanges on Malaria with the Traditional Healers of the District of Bamako, a ceremony was carried out in honour of Tiémogo Bengaly, Head of Village and Traditional Healer of Missidouyou, Arrondissement of Finkolo-Farako, Region of Sikasso (Mali). The motivation, written in the diploma delivered to the Healer was the following: *"To have made his knowledge on the medicinal plants anti-malaria free available to the population of Mali and to have participated with a great helpfulness and effectiveness in the different researches conducted for corroborating the use of medicinal plants for the treatment of non complicated Malaria at the village level"*.



Photo n° 1 : The Prof. Diallo delivers the Honour Diploma

There were present to the Ceremony, among the others: the Dr Minkaïla Maïga for the OMS, Mr. Patrick Etienne, Representative assistant of the Office of the Swiss Cooperation, the Prof. Drissa Diallo, Chief of the DMT, the Dr George Dakono, Manager of the National Program of Struggle against the Malaria, Mr. Mohamed Fall, President of the Malian Federation of Healers and Herbalists, the personnel of the DMT and more than about thirty Traditional Healers and Herbalists, men and women.



Photo n° 2 : The Honour Diploma for Tiémogo Bengaly

The long and fruitful collaboration with Tiémogo Bengaly was developed in the frame of the project "Traditional Practices and Primary Health Cares", carried out by the DMT of the INRSP, and by the Swiss Ngo Antenna Technologies, with the support of the PNLN and the participation of the international net RITAM. Aidemet Ngo participated in the strategic reflection and assured the coordination of the activities, the technical and financial management, and the communication among the different actors.

During the first phases of the Project (2002-2003), a plant used in the Finkolo area attracted the attention of the researchers, the *Argemone mexicana* L. (*Papaveraceae*). Its use by the population was always associated to a positive therapeutic result. It is so that the group of

research identified the village of Missidougou and its Head, Tiémogo Bengaly, which treated the patients infected by Malaria with this plant. Some tests of laboratory showed an important activity *in vitro* of the extracts of *A. mexicana* against *Plasmodium falciparum*, comparable to the activity of the extracts of *Artemisia annua*, whose active principle is the base of the new medicines against the Malaria. The studies of the toxicity subsequently conducted showed the harmlessness and the safety of employment of this plant.



Photo n° 3 : *Argemone mexicana*

Next, the collaboration was developed: during the raining season of the year 2005, a study of clinical observation, conducted in the village of Missidougou, allowed the evaluation of the ethno-medical evidence of the use of *A. mexicana* in the treatment of simple malaria. It dealt with carrying out a series of clinical and biological controls of the patients, the Traditional Healer decided to treat for malaria with the decoction of the plant. The results were more encouraging for the patients of more of 5 years, with 89% of adequate clinic riposte.

In 2006, in the same village, a randomized and controlled clinical study was conducted, comparing the treatment with the decoction of *A. mexicana* to the treatment with an Artemisinin Combined Thérapy. The control of the patients was realized during the three following months; no patient has been lost of sight. In the two groups, the evolution toward the severe malaria, that was the chosen principal indicator, was under 5%, level of reference mentioned by the international studies.

Thanks to these results, the DMT decided to set an Improved Traditional Medicine (ITM) based on this plant. When the Head of the DMT asked to Tiémogo Bengaly what he wanted for allowing the use of its formula, its answer has been: *"I don't want money, because God has given us the plants to take care of our populations. I only ask that the memory of my name is transmitted."*

The Dr Sergio Giani, Programs Officer of Aidemet Ong, which participated to all the phases of the project, at the end of the ceremony declared: *"Today I am very happy and touched. To my knowledge, it is the first time in Mali that a Traditional Healer has publicly been honored to have put his knowledge on the medicinal plants at the researcher's disposal, for the health care of the populations. We could show together that not only the collaboration between the researchers and the actors of the traditional medicine is possible, but also is important and profitable for the care of malaria, first cause of morbidity and mortality in Mali. I hope that the acquired experiences during the collaboration with Tiémogo Bengaly can serve for an example for all of us."*



Photo n° 4 : Prototype of MTA based on *Argemone mexicana*

**Text compiled by Dr Sergio Giani, Programs Officer of Aidemet Ong**

**Photo: Archive Aidemet**