

Description of ASCI Research Projects

This document contains an overview of the various research projects that are being carried out under the auspices of the AIDS, Security and Conflict Initiative (ASCI). The research projects are divided into five thematic research clusters:

- 1) HIV/AIDS in the military, police and peacekeeping operations;
- 2) HIV/AIDS, humanitarian crises and post-conflict transitions;
- 3) HIV/AIDS and fragile states;
- 4) HIV/AIDS and gender issues;
- 5) HIV/AIDS and cross-cutting issues

1. Thematic cluster: HIV/AIDS and the Uniformed Services

The principal research activity for this cluster is to catalogue how armies are responding to the challenges of HIV/AIDS. The overall research approach is to compile information on programmes and policies with respect to HIV/AIDS across a large number of armies, principally in Africa but also in Central America and South-East Asia. The research in this thematic cluster is framed by an analysis of the drivers of HIV/AIDS prevalence and the determinants of effective prevention and testing policy. It builds upon the existing evidence base for patterns and levels of HIV prevalence in national armed forces. Relevant research on HIV/AIDS and the military in Russia will also be conducted as part of Thematic cluster 3. The overall objective of this cluster is to demonstrate that many armies have succeeded in responding effectively to the threat posed by HIV/AIDS but substantial improvements are possible.

A. HIV/AIDS in the Uniformed Services in Central America

The major objective of this research project is to determine how the uniformed services in five Central American countries are responding to the problem of HIV. The research will primarily focus on the armed forces in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua. It seeks to address the question of how the armed forces in these countries have responded to the disease by investigating testing, prevention and treatment policies as well as rotation, deployment and demobilisation practices. Attention will also be given to the specific institutional medical services and the relation between the uniformed services and the civilian population. Alongside the research on armed forces, a comparable but less intensive study will be carried out on the police forces in the above mentioned countries, including Costa Rica.

- **Research partner:** Utrecht University, The Netherlands
- **Final product:** The research activities mentioned above will culminate into a research report that will offer an informed and detailed analysis of HIV policies and practices in the uniformed services of the selected countries.

B. Exploring the Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Operational Effectiveness of Military Forces

The aim of this research is to determine the impact of HIV/AIDS on the operational effectiveness of military forces in the Global South, especially Sub Saharan Africa. The research will set out the key components of operational capability and the factors that influence the effectiveness of a military force. It will then identify how HIV/AIDS affects the various

functional and specialist areas across the military community. Based on this analysis, the strategic and operational approaches for dealing with HIV/AIDS in the military will be assessed.

- **Research partner:** Cranfield University Centre for Security Sector Management, United Kingdom
- **Final product:** A report that aims to fill important gaps in the existing empirical evidence on linkages between HIV/AIDS and security sector issues, including recommendations and an AIDS Operational Effectiveness Impact Framework.

C. HIV/AIDS, the Military, UN Peacekeeping Forces and Sex Workers in Sri Lanka

This research project focuses on three vulnerable groups in Sri Lanka and will assess the level of knowledge of HIV/AIDS, availability of and access to prevention methods, and actual use of these methods among members of vulnerable groups. The vulnerable groups under study include UN peacekeeping forces from Sri Lanka that have been deployed in Haiti, military personnel and sex workers. An important aspect of this project is to review current policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS and to offer recommendations in order to improve HIV/AIDS programmes that target these vulnerable groups.

- **Research partner:** International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Sri Lanka
- **Final product:** A final report with research findings and suggested measures to improve knowledge, accessibility and use of prevention methods. In addition, dissemination of findings and recommendations through local workshops, public outreach, a special website and the distribution of CD-ROMs
- **Budget:** Additional funding received from ICES and UN Population Fund (UNFPA)

D. Comparative Study on Intervention Packages on HIV/AIDS in African Armed Forces

This project will carry out research on armed forces in Africa, in particularly those participating in AU peace support operations as peace keepers and observers. The overall objective is to map how armed forces in Africa are responding to the disease. The study will look at how national, regional and international policies are being translated into practical projects and programs within the countries under review. In addition, there will be a comparative analysis of the intervention policies/packages of the different countries in order to identify major gaps and good practices.

- **Research partner:** Center for Policy research and Dialogue (CPRD), Ethiopia
- **Final product:** A report that analyses and discusses the effectiveness of existing intervention HIV policies in the countries under review. In addition, the report will offer practical recommendations that can be incorporated into the Common Defence and Security Policy (CDSP) of the African Union.

E. Assessing and Analysing HIV Pre-Deployment Policies and Practices of UN Troop Contributing Countries

This research project is receiving additional funding from the Security and Humanitarian Response Unit at UNAIDS. The aim of this research project is to employ empirical research techniques to assess the pre-deployment practices of a wide spectrum of UN troop contributing countries¹ in order to evaluate the extent to which both international support to military AIDS

¹ Countries under review are Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Ethiopia, Uruguay, Brazil, USA, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, France and Ukraine.

programs and current UN policy on HIV/AIDS for troops contributors should be revisited and revised. The primary objective is to review military HIV/AIDS policies and the extent to which they have been implemented in the selected countries to review military HIV policies and their implementation into concrete programmes in these countries. Furthermore, additional research will be undertaken to Analyze military HIV/AIDS policies in the context of operational deployments in order to identify any gaps that need to be filled.

- **Research partner:** Cranfield University Centre for Security Sector Management (United Kingdom), with support from the Institute for Security Studies (South Africa) and Fundacion Ideas Para La Paz (Columbia)
- **Final product:** A report based on 16 case-studies, that will provide an assessment of different testing and counselling policies within militaries as well as policies relating to HIV prevention, treatment and care
- **Budget:** Additional funding from UNAIDS

2. Thematic Cluster: HIV/AIDS, Humanitarian Crises and Post-Conflict Transitions

The overall aim of the research in the second thematic cluster is to extract clear evidence-based policy and programme recommendations for how HIV/AIDS initiatives should be designed for humanitarian crisis and post-conflict transitions. To date, post-conflict and reconstruction programmes have not taken HIV/AIDS sufficiently into account. A careful specification of the drivers of the epidemic in specific situations will allow these interventions to be better designed, sequenced and implemented, and will lead to a new perspective and set of actionable recommendations on the design and implementation of post-conflict transition and reconstruction efforts. Similarly, the framework for examining effective HIV/AIDS policies should enable interventions to be assessed and improved.

A. Comparative Research on HIV/AIDS in the Context of Post-Conflict Transitions

This is a coordinated research project on HIV/AIDS in the context of humanitarian crisis and post-conflict transition in six countries. The research will take place in Bosnia, Cambodia, DRC, Liberia, East Timor and Haiti. The principal objective of the project is to quickly generate a body of data on HIV/AIDS in the context of post-conflict transition in the above mentioned countries that are emerging from conflict or that have done so in the past twenty years in different regions in the world. The project will assess evidence for the nature and extent of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in these countries and the extent to which HIV/AIDS considerations are incorporated into national recovery or reconstruction policies and programs. Moreover, the project will identify the most vulnerable groups in settings of post-conflict transition and what role the process of transition plays in placing people at new or increased risk of HIV/AIDS. In addition the research will assess how HIV/AIDS may affect the process of transition, future security and recovery.

- **Research partner:** International Centre of Migration and Health (ICMH), Switzerland
- **Final product:** The findings of the research will be reviewed by a small group of experts and country investigators and a report and recommendations will be developed.

B. HIV/AIDS and Armed Conflict: A Global Assessment

By employing a global database of political conflict (interstate and civil war, genocide/politicide) together with reported HIV/AIDS cases and data on forced refugees, this research project will attempt to statistically assess general relationships. This research design will result in a general understanding of overall trends in HIV/AIDS and conflict, as well as a more detailed understanding of causal mechanisms.

- **Research partner:** University of Maryland, United States
- **Final product:** A research paper that presents research findings.

3. Thematic cluster: HIV/AIDS and Fragile States

The general objectives for the research in this thematic cluster include empirically testing the hypothesis that HIV/AIDS contributes to state fragility at different levels and investigating the implementation of HIV/AIDS programmes and policies in countries that are classified as fragile states. Given that there are now sufficient indicators for state effectiveness and fragility, it is possible to draw very general lessons about the possible, and demonstrated, relationship between HIV/AIDS and state fragility. It is likely that such a relationship exists only under certain specific conditions, and research activities within this cluster will allow for at least a preliminary specification of those conditions, while also exploring why it is that states have shown greater-than-expected resilience. In addition, the impact of high-prevalence HIV/AIDS epidemics on small states, which already have very limited human resources and capabilities, will receive special attention through targeted research. The second main exercise of cluster three is to examine how best to design and implement HIV/AIDS policies and programmes in fragile states.²

A. Statistical Analysis on HIV/AIDS and Fragile States

This research project aims to provide a better understanding of the link between the HIV/AIDS epidemic and fragile states. The study will look for epidemiological and demographic evidence to empirically test what the causal links are, if any, between HIV/AIDS epidemic and state fragility for a set of countries. The key question guiding this research is whether the (high) prevalence of HIV/AIDS in a country pushes it towards fragility. The research will mainly concentrate on Sub Sahara Africa, but will take the developments in Asia and the former Soviet Union also into account. By carrying out statistical analysis the study will try to explore if there is a causal link between the HIV/AIDS prevalence and (government) institutions inability to perform their duties and fulfil their mandates.

- **Research partner:** LSEAIDS, London School of Economics, United Kingdom
- **Final product:** The research findings, presented in the final report, will provide important data on the correlation between HIV/AIDS and state fragility.

B. The Challenge of Increased AIDS Deaths in the Local Governance Sector in South Africa

The main objective of this research project is to assess the impact of HIV/AIDS on South African local government, as this level of government has been inadequately studied to date. The study uses the prism of electoral democracy to investigate the extent to which HIV/AIDS may

² These states fall broadly into two categories: those in which the government has collapsed or is ineffective, and those in which the government is dictatorial and repressive.

contribute to state fragility and its potential consequences for state sustainability in South Africa. This research project is expected to provide valuable insights into the extent of attrition to AIDS amongst political elites, the underlying causes and levels of stigma amongst the elected representatives and the new challenges faced by their constituencies in participating in the democratic process. It seeks to determine the operational impacts of the illness and mortality on the council and municipal functioning and conclusions will be drawn about the extent to which these deaths are influencing the quality of democracy and thus the stability of the state.

- **Research partner:** Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), South Africa
- **Final product:** A research report presenting research findings and explaining in what ways the HIV/AIDS pandemic will impact on the functioning of the local authorities in South Africa.

C. The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Russian Federation.

This research project attempts to provide new information on the potential impact of HIV/AIDS in Russia. By reviewing recent evidence, the study will consider whether and in what ways HIV/AIDS might or might not contribute to fragility in the Russian state including the armed forces. One of the factors in this causal relationship to be explored is the reduction in the number of eligible fit youths for military services due to HIV/AIDS

- **Research partner:** Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, United States
- **Final product:** A briefing report on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the Russian state.

D. Exploring the Links between Local Government and Electoral Reform and Increasing HIV/AIDS Rates in West Papua, Indonesia.

The HIV incidence rate in the West Papua region of Eastern Indonesia is increasing since 2000. This research will focus on one of the potential causes for this increase, namely the ways in which local government and electoral reform have impacted on local economic and social development patterns. This local government reform in the form of decentralisation has been implemented across Indonesia since 2001. The decentralisation process has impacted on employment and migration patterns, which can give an explanation for the increased HIV incidence rate. Furthermore the electoral reform has led to a reallocation of funds for electoral purposes at the cost of local health and education budgets which also increases the risk of HIV infection. This study aims to explore this link between the government reforms and the increased HIV incidence in West Papua. The outcome of this study can have important consequences for current development policies, including governance and health programmes.

- **Research partner:** Development Studies Institute at the London School of Economics, United Kingdom
- **Final Product:** A research paper that has as its central objective to explore the rationale behind the argument that government and electoral reform is related to increased HIV rates in West Papua.

E. How the States of South East Asia Respond to HIV/AIDS

This project will examine the responses of south east Asian states to HIV/AIDS, with particular reference to Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia. In particular, given the distinct and very different political histories and social structures of these three countries, their different cultural orientations and differing epidemiologies, the research will examine the questions listed as

influencing policy formulation and outcome developed at the LaTrobe workshop held in April 2007. Among the conclusions of that workshop was the view that good policymaking (and by inference, good policy outcomes) is determined not by the broad political characteristics of the state (democratic or authoritarian, stable or fragile), but rather by the specificities of the policymaking process, and in particular by the way in which key national and international policymakers have been engaged in the various stages and levels of the policymaking process. The study will primarily draw upon a review of existing literature and a number of in-depth interviews with key informants, in South East Asia but also in the region, notably with Professor D. Tarantola of the University of New South Wales.

- **Research Partner:** LaTrobe University, Australia
- **Final product:** A research paper that presents research findings.

F. ART Expansion and Fragilities in Mozambique

This study benefits from access to extensive data collected by the researcher who is undertaking the first ethnographic study of ARV roll out in a state that by many criteria meets the definition of “fragility”. The main objectives of this particular study in the context of Mozambique are to qualify and analyze ARV treatment expansion in relation to state fragility as well as to identify other forms of fragility in relation to ARV treatment expansion. The health sector occupies a very particular position in relation to the politics of the Mozambican state. It represents the success of the incumbent political party in the struggle for independence. ARV roll out presents a challenge to this ideological position and therefore a particular test of state capability and autonomy in its relation with bilateral and multilateral donor partners.

- **Research Partner:** LSEAIDS, London School of Economics, United Kingdom
- **Final product:** A research paper that presents research findings in order to improve our understanding of fragility and ARV treatment expansion in Mozambique.

G. AIDS and State Fragility in the South Pacific

The aim of this research project is to investigate the relationship between AIDS and state fragility in the South Pacific, with a focus on Papua New Guinea. Perspectives from Africa will be reviewed to see if they are applicable to the South Pacific. The conditions that make states fragile in Africa, according to analysts, will be synthesised and compared with the situation in the South Pacific. Existing evidence that links HIV to state fragility in Africa will be compared with the situation in the South Pacific. The study will primarily draw upon a review of existing literature and a number of in-depth interviews with key informants.

- **Research Partner:** LaTrobe University, Australia
- **Final product:** A research paper that presents research findings.

H. Impact of HIV/AIDS on Local Government Effectiveness in India's Northeast Region

The proposed study seeks to address the question whether HIV/AIDS has had any effect on local government effectiveness in India's north-eastern Region. The reason for this focus on India's two north-eastern states (Manipur and Nagaland) stems from the fact that these are two of the six high prevalent or generalized epidemic states in the country. In addition, both states are plagued by insurgency and an already fragile state apparatus that potentially may be affected by high prevalence rates. In order to assess the impact of the disease on the effectiveness of local

government, the study attempts to measure and quantify wherever possible its impact on local elected bodies, military and police, health care services and the education system.

- **Research Partner** University of Jammu, India
- **Final product:** A research paper that presents research findings.

I. Diametric Perceptions of Humanitarian Engagement in Burma (Myanmar)

The purpose of the study is to understand how local understandings of the context shape the tactics of international non governmental organizations (INGOs) working on HIV/AIDS in Burma. While external opposition and human rights groups believe the politically sensitive environment imposes too many restrictions on aid work, internal actors maintain that there is significant room to manoeuvre. Despite the lack of legal accountability and human rights abuses of the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), local viewpoints indicate that humanitarian actors find the cracks in the system and locate the space in which to operate. Rather than reacting to impenetrable constraints on aid, humanitarian agencies perceive aid delivery as an iterative process in which local actors have agency to contest the government's restrictions. Given the potential for doing harm, the main question in this research is how INGOs negotiate aid delivery and manoeuvre through constraints on programme implementation.

- **Research Partner:** Department of Social Studies, Harvard University, United States
- **Final product:** A summary paper that presents research findings.

4. HIV/AIDS and Gender Issues

ASCI's research team has identified a number of important cross-cutting issues, whereby gender has been prioritised as an important cross-cutting theme when considering the relation between HIV/AIDS, conflict and security. Although gender is an important theme in each of the research clusters, additional gender-focused research is being carried out. Research on gender in relation to HIV/AIDS will contribute to a better understanding of the extent and impact of sexual violence in situations associated with the military, conflict and crisis. In addition, research aims to identify the socio-cultural traits of masculinity that are linked to the military and the drivers of HIV prevalence.

A. HIV/AIDS, Sexual Violence and Exploitation during Post-Conflict Transitions: The Case of Sierra Leone.

This study focuses on the key drivers and risk factors of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in post-conflict Sierra Leone. It will explore the ways in which these risk factors are driven by sexual violence and exploitation (SVE). In addition, the research will examine the social norms and pressures that shape roles, rights, responsibilities, and sexual relationships in post-conflict situations and how these processes impact on SVE and HIV/AIDS. The main objectives of the research are to examine the nature and extent of SVE and its impact on women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, to identify the key drivers of HIV/AIDS and to examine the perceptions about the causes and consequences of SVE. Moreover, this research will elaborate on the rights and responsibilities of different actors in dealing with sexual violence and exploitation, and examine how gender inequalities and norms including masculinities are socially constructed and how these processes impact on SVE and HIV/AIDS.

- **Research partner:** Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa

- **Final product:** A research report that examines the nature and extent of SVE and its impact on women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. The report will include clear and immediate policy and programme recommendations for HIV/AIDS prevention, based on the empirical evidence of the key drivers and risk factors of the epidemic in Sierra Leone.

B. Modelling Increases in HIV Risk Following Rape

With the increasing body of evidence about the prevalence of sexual violence in conflict and non-conflict setting, there is growing debate about the potential role of sexual violence in helping to facilitate HIV transmission. This project aims to summarise the potential factors associated with the transmission of HIV in different circumstances of coerced sex. For specific assumptions about the degree to which these different factors may be associated with increased risk of HIV transmission, mathematical modelling will be used to estimate the impact of sexual violence on the victim's risk of HIV acquisition.

- **Research partner:** London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom
- **Final product:** A briefing paper summarising the potential factors associated with the transmission of HIV in different circumstances of coerced sex and highlighting the implications of violence for women's risk of HIV transmission.

C. Factoring Power and Gender into Core Group HIV Models

The traditional models of HIV transmission have envisioned sex workers as a primary 'core group' and their male clients as the 'bridging population' to female members of the public (e.g. wives, girlfriends). This project aims to reconsider these traditional HIV transmission models and assumptions in order to develop a more sophisticated model that better reflects the complexity of how the infection spreads within different populations. The limitations of traditional concepts like 'core groups' and 'bridging population' will be revealed and a new conceptual model for core groups will be designed. This renewed conceptualisation takes more explicitly into account the levels of mobility, autonomy and power of different sub-groups of sex workers.

- **Research partner:** London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom
- **Final product:** The conceptual model that forms the final product of the research will help to better represent the complexity of subgroups within traditional HIV/AIDS transmission theory.

D. Gender, HIV/AIDS and DDR in Burundi

This research will look into the post-conflict transition in Burundi with particular emphasis on the relationship between ex-combatants, their re-integration within communities, the changing nature of HIV/AIDS, and gender relationships within the country. It attempts to provide a gendered analysis of the HIV/AIDS situation under the changing risk factors during the post-conflict period and promises to fill an important gap in what is known about the gendered nature of the risk factors in relation to HIV/AIDS in Burundi.

- **Research partner:** London School of Economics, United Kingdom (Dr. Seckinelgin)
- **Final product:** A research paper that presents research findings.

E. *HIV as a Weapon of War in Rwanda: the Aftermath*

Drawing from field research in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the project will assess the deliberate use of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases as a weapon of war and provide recommendations for appropriate 'remedies' and responses, including legal, political and socio-economic.

- **Research partner:** Africa Rights
- **Final product:** A research paper that presents research findings.

5. HIV/AIDS and Cross-Cutting Issues

Apart from gender, other cross-cutting themes to be studied are HIV/AIDS in relation to security sector reform (SSR) programmes and policies, the impact of HIV/AIDS on the police and global media coverage of HIV/AIDS as a security issue.

A. The Visual Economy of HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue

This project will analyze the visualization of HIV/AIDS as a security issue in the period subsequent to 2000. In this period HIV/AIDS has shifted from a public health matter to a regional and global security issue. The major objective of this study is to determine whether the visual representation of HIV/AIDS from 2000 onwards reflects this change in focus and, if not, what visual strategies might be implemented in order to manifest the linkages between HIV/AIDS and security. The major component of the project is the analysis of how HIV/AIDS has been pictured as a security issue. The study will elaborate on the gap between the security problematic of HIV/AIDS and its current visualization and how this gap could be addressed.

- **Research partner:** Durham University, United Kingdom
- **Final product:** The final product of this research is a web portal and a research paper on the visualization of HIV/AIDS as a security issue.

B. The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Police: Implications for Strategic Policy and Operations

HIV/AIDS and the police is an important issue. Not only are police forces institutions that are impacted by the epidemic, but they are also in the front line of dealing with many of the groups most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. However, the police remain much-neglected in research and programming on HIV/AIDS. The purpose of this research project is to assess and deepen the understanding of the linkages between and impact of HIV/AIDS on police forces. Based on a review of existing literature and interviews with key informants, this study attempts to establish how HIV/AIDS impacts upon police forces. In addition, it seeks to identify and map the current range of programmatic responses to the disease by national police forces.

- **Research partner:** Libra Advisory Group, United Kingdom
- **Final product:** The output of this research consists of a paper which can be used by police policymakers, practitioners and researchers to promote constructive dialogue and best practice concerning HIV/AIDS policy across the global policing community.

C. Assessing the Mainstreaming of HIV Policies and Programming into DDR and SSR Activities in Southern Sudan

The general objective of this research project is to arrive at a comprehensive assessment of HIV interventions in relation to broader DDR and security sector reform initiatives that are currently

being undertaken in South Sudan. The study will discuss, analyse and recommend HIV intervention programmes in the context of ongoing post-conflict DDR and SSR initiatives.

- **Research partner:** Anyieth Dawol (Consultant)
- **Final product:** A report that will present major findings as well as concrete recommendations on the base of these assessments that can be shared with all relevant stakeholders involved in security sector reform in post-conflict settings.