

# HSRC International Brief

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## LOOKING AT HIV/AIDS IN THE MILITARY SECTOR IN AFRICA

A priority among armed forces in Africa is participation in multilateral peacekeeping operations. A main concern is the high HIV/AIDS prevalence in the armed forces and finding policies and practices to address this matter.

This was the chief aim of a regional conference, jointly organised by the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) and the African Union (AU) and hosted by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) in Jinja, Uganda on 11-13 March 2009.

Professor Leickness Simbayi, who heads up the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS and Health research programme at the HSRC, was invited as one of several research experts to present a keynote paper on *HIV/AIDS and the African Military: Towards a common and comprehensive approach*.

The conference examined how collaborative security and development of the regional brigades could be achieved as part of the Africa peace and security architecture. It also explored international, regional and national policies and practices relating to managing the impact of HIV/AIDS on peacekeeping operations.

Simbayi's paper on the use of the second-generation HIV surveillance approaches in

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*Dear friends of the HSRC*

*It is indeed a pleasure to keep you informed of the activities and initiatives at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Many of you will be familiar with our work and we take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and interest in our research.*

*The core business of the HSRC is to conduct large-scale, policy-relevant, social-scientific projects for public-sector users, non-governmental organisations and international development agencies. We do this in partnership with researchers globally, but specifically in Africa.*

*Our commitment to cutting-edge research, which supports development nationally, in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and in Africa is evident, but it is our commitment to the dissemination of that research that demonstrates the remarkable and measurable impact of our work.*

*As the national social science council of South Africa, the HSRC wishes to serve as a knowledge hub to bridge the gap between research, policy and action, thereby increasing the impact of our research. This is achieved through collaboration with key constituencies, including government, other research organisations, multinational agencies, universities, non-government organisations, donors and development agencies.*

*With a dedicated staff complement of more than 400 professional researchers, research managers, trainees, technical staff and administrative support staff who are based in five offices in four different provinces of South Africa, the HSRC is well equipped to respond flexibly and comprehensively to current and emerging needs. Our research focuses on user needs and consists of four multi-disciplinary research programmes, two research units that cut across and complement other work done at the HSRC, and three research centres. These are:*

**Research programmes:**

- *Child, Youth, Family and Social Development*
- *Democracy and Governance*



Dr Olive Shisana, CEO of the HSRC

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## HSRC and CODESRIA talks on joint initiatives

The HSRC and CODESRIA met for two days in Cape Town in March to further consolidate the two organisations' joint

initiatives in publications, public policy dialogues, and the co-hosting of conferences and exhibitions at important international events.

"We will also be jointly hosting several sessions at the upcoming International Social Science Council's World Social Science Forum that will be taking place in Bergen, Norway from 10 - 12 May. "

"A priority will be translating the joint publication, *The Meanings of Timbuktu*, into French so that French-speaking countries can access this important document", said Bridgette Prince, head of International Liaison of the HSRC.

One such key joint session, to be co-hosted with UNESCO, will focus on "rethinking social policies in light of the economic crisis, and turning the crisis into an opportunity for social development and policies".



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- Education, Science and Skills Development
- Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS and Health (including the Africa-wide research network, the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA))

**Cross-cutting units:**

- Policy Analysis and Capacity Enhancement
- Knowledge Systems

**Centres:**

- Education Quality Improvement
- Poverty, Employment and Growth
- Service Delivery

HSRC Press, the publishing arm of the HSRC, is South Africa's only open access publisher and is committed to the dissemination of high quality, social science research-based publications, in print and electronic form. HSRC Press publishes the research output of the HSRC and externally authored works. A formal peer-review process guarantees the highest academic quality and the Press has an active local and international marketing programme, in addition to collaborating with foreign publishers on specific titles.

We look forward to engaging with you now and in the future.

For further information, please go to [www.hsrc.ac.za](http://www.hsrc.ac.za), or contact the head of International Liaison, Bridgette Prince: e-mail, [bprince@hsrc.ac.za](mailto:bprince@hsrc.ac.za); telephone, +27 21 466 7968.

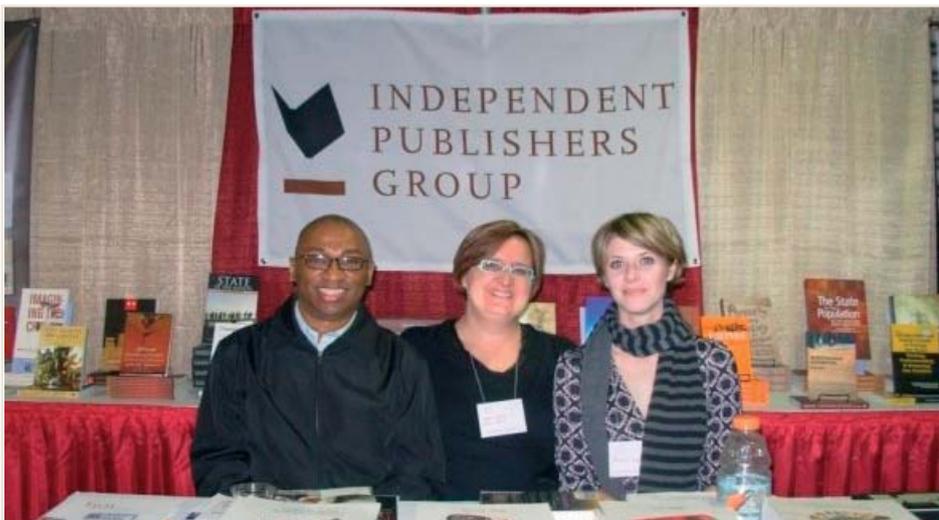


Dr Olive Shisana  
CEO

## HSRC Press exhibits in Chicago, USA

The HSRC Press set up and managed an exhibit together with their US Sales Agents, Independent Publishers Group (IPG), displaying HSRC Press publications at the African Studies Association 51st Annual Conference in Chicago, USA. The theme for the conference was "Knowledge for Africa: The Next Fifty Years".

Said Karen Bruns, marketing manager of HSRC Press: "We recorded excellent sales of HSRC Press titles and there was a lot of interest from the more than 900 delegates about the HSRC and South Africa."



Shaun Stuart (HSRC Press), Karen Bruns (HSRC Press) and Annie Johnston (IPG)

## HSRC Press briefs CODESRIA General Assembly on open access policy

"The HSRC Press continues to support the social science research community through a strong commitment to opening access to quality social science in Africa," stated Mr Shaun Stuart, the marketing coordinator of the publication arm of the HSRC. He gave a brief talk at the conference of the 12th General Assembly of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), held in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The conference, under the theme "Governing the African Public Sphere", was attended by an impressive delegation of social scientists from the African university communities and the diaspora, together with representatives from the 65 partner institutions of CODESRIA, of which the HSRC is one. Most of the participants were esteemed scholars who were regarded as authorities in the social sciences field.

Stuart highlighted the fact that the HSRC Press is a non-profit publisher, committed to the dissemination of high-quality social science publications, in print and electronic form. "HSRC Press is a hybrid press, with a mandate to disseminate HSRC research output and other valuable social science research."

He remarked that various other exhibitors at the conference, including The Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) and CODESRIA, were now also moving towards adopting a similar open access electronic publishing model, which the HSRC Press has pioneered in Africa.

HSRC Press also drew attention with an exhibition of its publications at the event.

The HSRC, as a partner of CODESRIA, further strengthened collaboration with the organisation by exploring cooperation in developing research capacity. HSRC delegates also identified individual members who could be invited to the HSRC as visiting African research scholars.

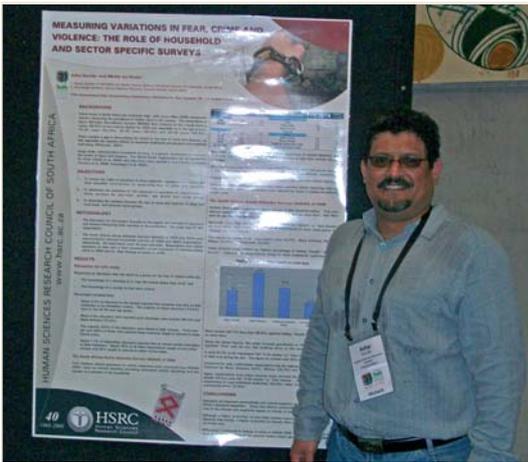
## CRIME AND VIOLENCE

# NIH grant for developing research administration at HSRC

The HSRC received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop its current research administrative infrastructure.

The HSRC's application for a grant from the NIH's International Extramural Associates Research Development Award (IEARDA), was to obtain access to resources to allow the HSRC to develop its current research administrative infrastructure, said Dr Christa van Zyl, who heads up Business Development at the HSRC.

"This will enable the central Business Development (BD) unit in the HSRC to become a strong, effective and enabling central support and coordinating unit for providing guidance and oversight over the administrative management of research grant applications and funded projects in general, and extramural awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in particular", Van Zyl said



**Mr Adlai Davids**

"Measuring variations in fear, crime and violence: the role of household and sector specific surveys" was the topic of a poster presented by Adlai Davids (SAHA) at the 17th International Safe Communities Conference, held in Christchurch, New Zealand in October 2008.

Safe Communities is an international network of municipalities with accredited programmes in safety promotion and injury, violence and suicide prevention. The conference theme was "Working together to make a difference".

The poster was co-authored by Dr Mbithiwa Kivilu, Director of Socio-economic Surveys in the Knowledge Systems research programme.



**Back: Prof. Luis Colom (Texas) Dr Exnevia Gomo (Malawi) Prof. John Kilburn (Texas) Mr Maurice Koo (NIH) Front: Dr Jean Flagg-Newton (NIH) Prof. Marisol Vera-Colón (Puerto Rico), Dr Elwyn Chombo (Zambia), Ms Andie Pfeffer (NIH), Ms Naa Dodua Dodoo (Ghana, doctoral scholarship in the USA), Dr Christa van Zyl (South Africa), Ms Betty Akumatey (Ghana, doctoral scholarship in the USA).**

"In this way, it intends to strengthen biomedical (health) and behavioural research activities at the HSRC and, where possible, counterpart research institutions".

## LOOKING AT HIV/AIDS IN THE MILITARY SECTOR IN AFRICA

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**Prof. Leickness Simbayi**

understanding the HIV epidemic in the military, highlighted the need for accurate data to inform the responses by member states. He said most statistics on HIV/AIDS prevalence were based on speculation without an understanding of the underlying drivers of the epidemic.

The conference reached broad consensus and accepted the need to use second-generation HIV surveillance approaches in the military to inform responses to the epidemic in member states.

These recommendations, together with others stemming from keynote presentations, will be passed on to the African Union (AU) for follow-up and possible adoption as AU policy and programmes.

As part of the process Van Zyl attended a three-week residential training programme for selected international candidates for the IEARDA grant. The grant, which amounts to US\$ 35 000 p.a. for five years, is made available to research institutions that have benefited from NIH funding in the past. The notion is to build and expand research capacity for NIH and other grant applications and management.

The programme was planned and coordinated by the Division of Special Populations Unit in the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

Apart from the training programme, a limited number of courtesy meetings were arranged with senior staff members working in institutes and offices in the NIH.

## CEO attends HIV/AIDS surveillance meeting in Thailand

Dr Olive Shisana, CEO of the HSRC and chair of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) Research Sector, addressed two plenary sessions at the 2nd Global HIV/AIDS Surveillance meeting in Bangkok, that took place on 2-5 March 2009.

The meeting, organised by the WHO, UNAIDS, CDC and PEPFAR, was hosted by the Ministry of Public Health in Thailand. It brought together technical staff from around the world to share ideas and experiences on innovation and developments in HIV surveillance and associated tools.

Shisana's first paper demonstrated a major gap in HIV surveillance, namely that children were excluded in surveillance. Her second paper concentrated on the HIV population-based survey questions used in South Africa for different age groups.

The meeting contributed to the HSRC's goal of integrating its work into global initiatives.

Specific objectives of the meeting were to:

- Review the current state of HIV-related surveillance throughout the world;
- Assess advances and setbacks in surveillance implementation since a meeting in 2004. Particular attention was paid to steps recommended in 2004;
- Evaluate gaps in global HIV surveillance;
- Evaluate the quality of global HIV surveillance activities;
- Discuss the creation of an electronic surveillance journal; and
- Develop strategic surveillance plan for the next five years.

Various researchers' contributions focused on the following areas

- Update of the Second Generation Surveillance, including STI surveillance and behavioural surveillance;
- Monitoring the HIV epidemic among high-risk populations and among TB-infected people;
- The evolution of surveillance related to scaling up HIV/AIDS interventions (ART, TC, PMTCT) through the use of



Dr Olive Shisana, CEO of the HSRC

program data, case reporting, HIV Drug Resistance, and related ethical issues;

- Tools and methods for better measuring of HIV incidence and HIV/AIDS mortality;
- Mechanisms based on better data and improved tools for developing epidemiological estimates, including interventions needs
- The implementation process of HIV surveillance, including: community participation; the use of technologies; the evaluation of surveillance systems; and the improved data use for improving responses.

### Children are missing in HIV surveillance

Dr Shisana's first paper demonstrated that there was a major gap in HIV surveillance, which excluded children. She shared the efforts that South Africa, Swaziland and Botswana were making in paediatric surveillance through population-based surveys and health-facility studies.

She concluded that:

- To get children into surveillance in health facilities there was a need to ensure they have access to existing

prevention, care and treatment programmes.

- Epidemiological data on children is essential to improve planning.
- Data should be available to assess the impact of PMTCT programmes and the impact of care and treatment programmes on mortality.
- To evaluate HIV-prevention programmes, it was necessary to do paediatric surveillance.

In her second paper, on the HIV population-based survey questions used in South Africa for different age groups, Shisana said surveys should include questions for children, youth and adults. Some of the key variables that were not usually included in population-based surveys were:

- HIV risk perceptions;
- Alcohol and substance use;
- Perceptions of government policies;
- Perceptions of Health Care systems;
- Violence in households;
- Media and communication;
- Prevention of mother to child transmission programmes.

She said by linking these socio-behavioural measures to HIV prevalence, helped South Africa in understanding the dynamics of this epidemic.