

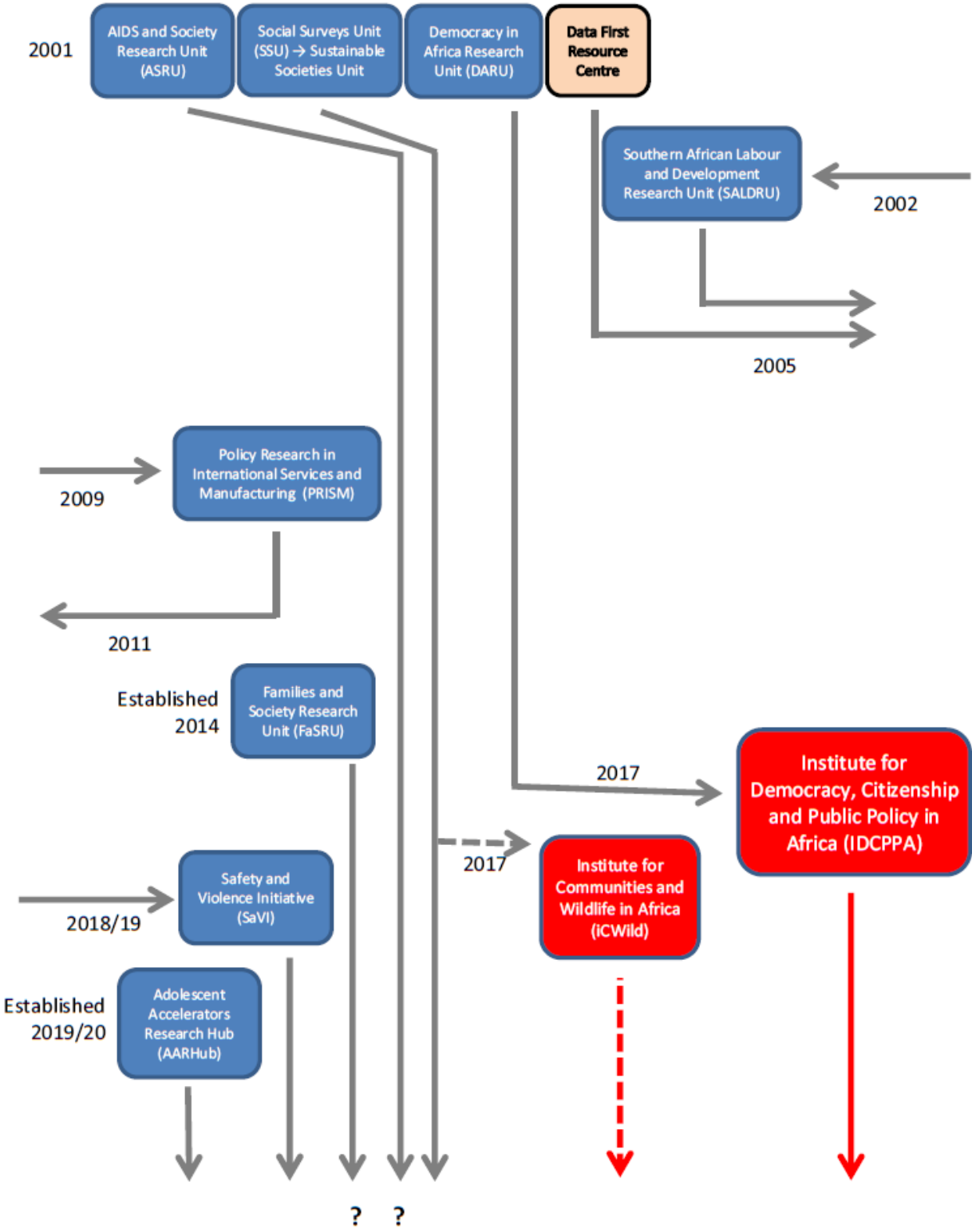
Centre for Social Science Research



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Centre for Social Science Research: Timeline



Director's report

Research institutes at the University of Cape Town – like the university's teaching departments – are regularly reviewed, supposedly every five years. The CSSR was reviewed in 2004 and 2010 but, for a variety of reasons, our third review was only held in 2021. As part of the review process we were required to conduct a self-review which was then shared with the external reviewers. The review process therefore provides us with an opportunity to take stock and reflect critically as well as to get external feedback. This year's review prompted us to consider what we have done over the past decade as well as the challenges we face as we move forward.

In our self-assessment we first examined what the CSSR is. The CSSR is an unusual research centre in two respects: Our research is defined more by our methods ('social science') than by the subjects we examine, and we have always been centrally concerned with capacity-building as well as research per se.

The CSSR was established in 2000/01 with strong support from the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Michigan ISR provided something of a role model in that it comprises a set of subject-specific and support units united in their concern with systematic social scientific methodologies.

The original objective of the CSSR was to strengthen social science research in the Southern African region, with a focus on the collection and analysis of quantitative data, especially survey data. The explosion in the availability of survey data and improved computer technologies in the 1990s had not been accompanied by any expansion of the corresponding skills of social scientists in Southern Africa, with the result that South African data was analysed primarily by scholars in North America. The CSSR was one of a set of initiatives to redress this, involving scholars with backgrounds spanning the social sciences.

Over time, our focus broadened to encompass mixed methods, whilst retaining a concern with systematic research. The CSSR is, as we have stated previously, 'an interdisciplinary research centre ... dedicated to conducting and building capacity for systematic, policy-relevant social science research in South Africa, the region and across Africa'. Our research is predominantly empirical and problem-driven.

The CSSR has always comprised semi-autonomous units and miscellaneous other projects. Units are typically teams comprising one (or sometimes more than one) senior researcher together with junior post-doctoral and graduate student researchers.

When it was established, the CSSR comprised the already-established AIDS and Society Research Unit (ASRU), a new Social Surveys Unit (SSU), a new Democracy in Africa Research Unit (DARU) and a new Data First Resource Centre (formed, under Francis Wilson's visionary leadership, out of the Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit, SALDRU). Soon after, the rest of SALDRU also joined the CSSR.

Over the past twenty years, a number of units have left the CSSR to become free-standing groupings. Other units have joined or have been established within the CSSR. The history of units into and out of the CSSR is shown opposite. The major developments in the recent past were: the establishment of a Families and Society Research Unit (FaSRU) in 2014; the establishment of an independent Institute for Democracy, Citizenship and Public Policy in Africa (IDCPPA), comprising DaRU and selected projects from the CSSR, in 2017; the cooperation with biological scientists to establish an independent Institute for Communities and Wildlife in Africa (iCWild) in 2017; the immigration of the Safety and Violence

Initiative (SaVI) in 2018/19; and the establishment of the Adolescent Accelerators Research Hub (AARHub, housing a portfolio of research on adolescent development including the UKRI GCRF Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents Hub) in 2018/19.

By the beginning of 2021, the CSSR therefore comprised five research units. One of these – the AIDS and Society Research Unit (ASRU) – has been suspended in 2021 (see page 5 below). Two other research units – the Safety and Violence Initiative (SaVI) and the Families and Society Research Unit (FaSRU) – are currently in a process of transition. The AARHub and the SSU remain active (as their reports below show). Indeed, the AARHub is exceptionally dynamic, comprising an entirely soft-funded team led by A/Prof Elona Toska, of five junior research fellows and research officers, six post-doctoral research fellows and several junior researchers employed (mostly on part-time contracts) as research assistants or supported through scholarships. The CSSR also has a small central directorate.

The vitality of the CSSR is evident in its track record over the past decade in terms of research, fund-raising, capacity-building and outreach or social engagement.

Research is most easily counted in terms of publications output. In the ten years 2011-20, CSSR researchers published a total of 7 monographs, 3 edited books and 3 special issues of journals, 252 articles in peer-reviewed journals and 96 book chapters. Over the decade we published 174 CSSR Working Papers. In 2021, CSSR researchers authored a further 39 book chapters, journal articles and working papers (see pages 12-13 below). This was slightly fewer than in the two preceding years, primarily because we published few working papers.

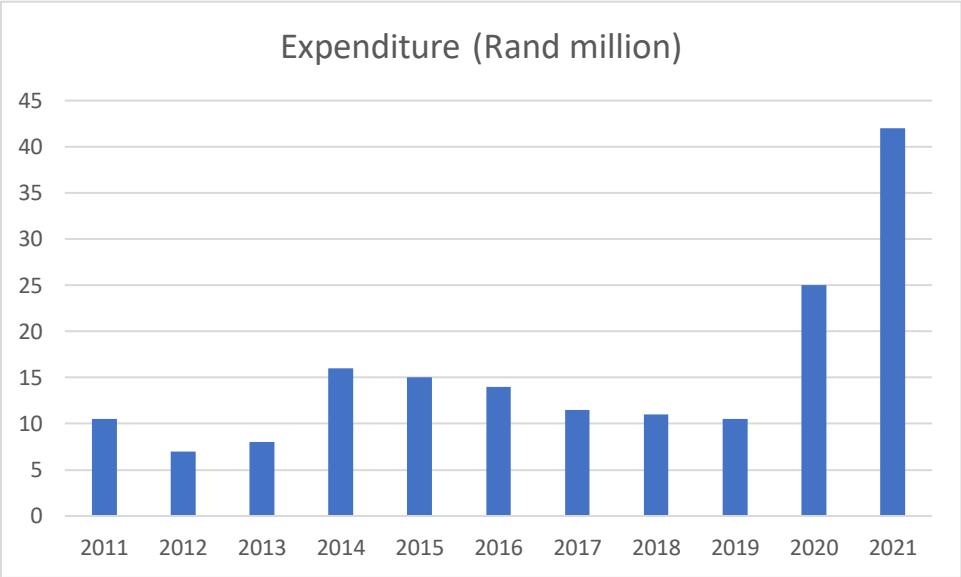
Capacity-building has been part of the CSSR's 'mission' from the outset. The CSSR has run Summer Schools and other short courses and supported teaching through UCT's teaching departments. We have provided considerable financial support for postgraduate students and post-doctoral research fellows, through either scholarships or employment as researchers or research assistants. And, very importantly, we have included postgraduate students (and post-doctoral research fellows) in research teams and a wider intellectual community.

Over the ten years 2011-20 we disbursed about R15 million in scholarships, in addition to substantial salary payments to students working as research assistants. Since 2012 we have supported the completion of PhDs by at least sixteen students. We have supported or are currently supporting a further seven PhD students and six Masters students who are working on their theses. In 2021, we provided approximately R1.5 million in financial support to students and an additional R2.5 million to post-doctoral research fellows.

The continued restrictions on events in 2021 meant that we could not resume face-to-face seminars and workshops (although we did resume online webinars in the second half of the year, see page 13). Online events are not a satisfactory substitute for in-person interaction and engagement. Lockdown certainly compromised our ability to provide the space for the formal and informal face-to-face interactions between researchers that are integral to a healthy community of scholars.

From its establishment the CSSR has also always been concerned with producing policy-relevant research and shaping public debate. We have worked closely with other civil society groups, within South Africa and internationally. We have continued to engage with government, both sparring and collaborating with it. In 2021 we continued both our strong support for policy reforms in response to COVID-19 and our strong criticisms of tardiness on the part of the South African government (including over its vaccination rollout – see page 11 below).

Research costs money. Large-scale research costs lots of money. The CSSR has been successful in raising funds, especially for large-scale data collection and processing (for Afrobarometer prior to 2017, then for Mzantsi Wakho, and most recently for the AARHub). Between 2011 and 2020 we spent a total of R 128 million, i.e. an average of almost R 13 million p.a. (see figure). Expenditure peaked in 2014-16 before dropping in 2017-19 after we diverted some of the CSSR’s activities to the new and separate IDCPPA. Expenditure rose again sharply with the growth of the AARHub in 2020. The AARHub accounted for about 40% of total CSSR expenditure in 2019, about 65% in 2020 and about 75% in 2021.



Leaving aside the immediate challenges of conducting research under lockdowns, the CSSR faces several major challenges. In our self-assessment we pointed to the challenges of financing the CSSR’s core operations, leadership ‘succession’ and the university’s increasingly complex bureaucracy.

Whilst we have been reasonably successful in raising project funding, we have struggled to fund our modest core expenses. The CSSR’s core operations were for many years funded generously by the Mellon Foundation. We have not found substitute funding. We do not benefit from institutional funding through the SARCHi or ‘centre of excellence’ programmes. Budget line items for indirect costs in our projects are absorbed by the university through ‘cost recovery’, leaving the CSSR itself bereft. The Humanities Faculty does pay for one finance officer. In 2021, acknowledging the immediate challenges of fund-raising during COVID lockdowns, the university kindly contributed to our core expenses through the COVID-19-related financial relief for soft-funded staff in research posts. Unfortunately, this was not enough. In mid-2021 we sadly bade farewell to our long-serving receptionist, Dumi Hlwele, who fortunately found employment elsewhere within the university, and to Lameez Mota, who served as Operations Manager for SaVI for many years.

As reported below, we suffered a further financial blow in 2021 when the AARHub’s major funder, the British government through its UKRI Grand Challenges Research Fund scheme, announced that it was reneging on its financial commitments, with considerable lack of clarity on the amounts and timelines until the end of 2021. Whilst the AARHub has been able to fill much of the funding shortfall from alternative sources, it has also had to cut back on a number of activities and to retrench some personnel.

A related challenge is that of ‘succession’. This is my eleventh report as CSSR director. I was part of the original group (comprising also Nicoli Nattrass as the first CSSR director, Francis Wilson, Bob Mattes and Murray Leibbrandt) that established the CSSR twenty years ago. For most of the past five years I have

also been 'interim' or acting director of the IDCPPA. This is neither ideal nor sustainable. The position of director needs to be (at least) a half-time position to allow the director to manage the CSSR, raise funds, provide intellectual leadership and facilitate the formation of new initiatives within the CSSR. But ... we do not have the funding to employ a director, making the role fundamentally unattractive to researchers who have extensive commitments to their existing funders or to members of the relevant social science departments in the university who could only take on the responsibilities of director if they were relieved of a large portion of their teaching. Moreover, the relevant teaching departments have generally not appointed academic staff with the mixed methods skills required in the CSSR.

Finally, the deepening bureaucratization of the university imposes rising costs on research centres such as the CSSR. Whenever the directors of UCT's research institutes gather for a coffee or drink, their conversation is dominated by a litany of grievances with the ever-growing administrative burden on them. As the university becomes more and more 'managerialist', administrative personnel less and less often play supportive roles and more and more often seem to see themselves as police, engaged in constant and exhausting surveillance and discipline.

The external reviewers – retired historian William Beinart (Oxford) and applied economist Dorrit Posel (Wits) – submitted an insightful report following an online review in August. The reviewers were generous in their praise of our 'outstanding' research (in terms of both quality and quantity), the breadth of our international and local collaborations, the dynamism of the new AARHub (under Elona Toska) and the prospective resuscitation of the SaVI (under Cathy Ward), and our strong support for postgraduate students and other junior researchers. Professors Beinart and Posel also reflected carefully on the way forward and made a number of important, constructive suggestions.

They acknowledged that the CSSR is defined more by its approach – i.e. the application of interdisciplinary social science, typically employing mixed methods by teams of researchers, to pressing challenges facing states and civil society in the region – than by any specific thematic focus. But they suggested also that the CSSR engages more proactively with respect to its core thematic strengths in the study of the challenges facing adolescents (including challenges of health and violence).

The reviewers considered at length the challenges of sustaining the CSSR's work. They concluded that the university's support for the CSSR was 'inadequate' and recommended that the university institutionalizes financial and administrative support for the director, to enable a 'dedicated director' to play 'a more pro-active role in initiating funding applications, supporting specific themes and agendas in social science research, and developing teaching capacity.' If the university wants to strengthen the social sciences, then it must make the strategic decision to allocate the necessary resources.

Overall, we are happy to have been able to continue our work through 2021 despite these challenges. We regret that we have not been able to take our entire team forward with us. We salute and thank Dumi Hlwele and Lameez Mota – who left SaVI after many years - for the work they have done over the years.

Jeremy Seekings.

Jeremy Seekings (Director)



AIDS and Society Research Unit (ASRU)

ASRU closed its doors in 2021 – at least for the time being – after two decades of outstanding research, public engagement and support for students. The decision to close ASRU followed the departure of its director, Rebecca Hodes, to take up the directorship of the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender at the University of Pretoria. Rebecca had led ASRU since 2015. Rebecca’s departure came at a time when we were already wondering about a focus on AIDS. Yes, HIV and AIDS remain major concerns in South Africa and elsewhere. But medical and social responses to HIV/AIDS are fundamentally different to the situation when ASRU was founded and began its work. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic forcefully reminded us of the importance of other health issues.

ASRU was founded by Nicoli Nattrass at a time when there was almost no research into either social or economic aspects of HIV/AIDS, the South African government was still hostile to rolling out treatment and there appeared to be widespread stigmatization of HIV-positive people across much of South African society. From the outset, therefore, ASRU’s research was oriented towards effecting changes in government policy and social attitudes. Research into the costs of treatment went hand-in-hand with outreach in Cape Town’s communities. ASRU’s academic ‘outputs’ included books, articles and working papers. ASRU’s more popular ‘output’ included books, Body Maps, Memory Boxes and the ‘Visual Body Map’ educational tool. Over its first decade ASRU worked with civil society (especially the Treatment Action Campaign and Médecines Sans Frontières), traditional healers and ‘western’ doctors, and the few government officials who were not resisting the expansion of treatment.

ASRU’s major initiative in its second decade was Mzantsi Wakho, launched in 2013 in partnership with Oxford University as an unprecedented community-based longitudinal study of HIV-positive adolescents. The UCT end of Mzantsi Wakho was led by Rebecca Hodes and later Elona Toska. In this second decade of its work, ASRU worked far more closely with government, as well as with international organisations such as UNICEF.

ASRU’s remarkable outreach did not mean that academic output was neglected. Over twenty years, ASRU’s researchers published a total of 12 books or edited collections, more than 170 journal articles and book chapters, and more than 100 additional Working Papers.

The closure of ASRU does not mean that the CSSR has ceased to conduct research into HIV and AIDS. Other units within the CSSR continue to conduct research, especially on the impact of HIV/AIDS on adolescents – as is evident in the report on the Accelerate Hub below. Researchers in the Accelerate Hub continue to analyse data from Mzantsi Wakho and other projects that were initially based in ASRU.

The current closure now does not preclude reopening at a future date, should circumstances make this appropriate.



The Adolescent Accelerators Research Hub

The Adolescent Accelerators Research Hub (AARHub) officially became a new unit of the CSSR during 2021, with a unified goal of promoting high-quality evidence to improve the lives of adolescents in resource-limited communities, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. It houses a portfolio of research and is led by the unit director, Associate Professor Elona Toska.

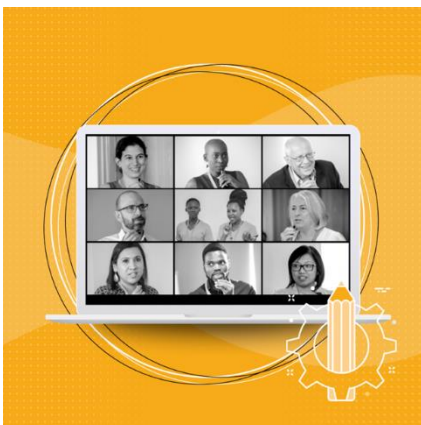


The current portfolio of research is based on a strong collaborative relationship with a team at the University of Oxford. It includes direct funding from CIPHER (a programme of the International AIDS Society), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the International Planned Parenthood Foundation, Fogarty International Centre/ National Institutes of Health, the Oak Foundation, and funding from ERC, MRC, UKRI GCRF, and UNICEF (via the partnership with Oxford University – PI: Prof Lucie Cluver). The unit's work focuses on social science research on adolescent health, social protection, parenting, education and COVID-19 responsive research, including:

- (1) fostering resilience among adolescent parents and their children,
- (2) secondary data analyses to identify development accelerators for adolescents,
- (3) costing and cost-effectiveness analyses of evidence-based programmes for adolescents, and
- (4) policy and advocacy engagement to move research into evidence-based public practice.

The AARHub's primary research consists of several ongoing research projects related to resilience and adolescent well-being, including the HEY BABY cohort (Helping Empower Youth Brought Up in Adversity with their Babies and Young children), ABCD (Ask-Boost-Connect-Discuss – a peer-led psychosocial support intervention for young people living with HIV), and Mzantsi Wakho/UPLIFT – a collaboration with the National Institute for Communicable Diseases/ National Laboratory Health Services (with Prof. Gayle Sherman).

While the UKRI GCRF Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents (Accelerate) Hub had previously been the central, and fiscally dominant, project of the unit, the UKRI GCRF ODA budget cuts announced in March 2021 triggered a change in the unit's funding landscape and an adjustment in its research foci. The team began actively seeking new funding opportunities, submitting seven funding applications at UCT for a total of R8,278,914 since mid-March, four of which have been confirmed as successful. In late November, UKRI GCRF confirmed that the Accelerate Hub would be granted significantly reduced funding through February 2024 to support data analyses. We are grateful for the University's financial support of staff and postdoctoral fellows.



Despite, or perhaps because of, the dual challenges of the pandemic and budget cuts, the AARHub has had a very busy year. The AARHub held a virtual Annual Meeting from 3 to 5 February, to come together as a team to reflect on the work it accomplished in the previous year and to discuss and consider its collective vision for 2021. The three-day meeting included:

- 29 presentations from researchers in
- 12 universities representing
- 6 countries including
- 30 Early Career Researchers.

This year, the AARHub welcomed two new postdoctoral research fellows to its group of early career researchers, **Drs Bolade Banougnin** and **Mia Granvik Saminathen**. They join the team of young researchers including four additional postdoctoral fellows, two Masters and four PhD students.

With in-person events cancelled, the team has had the opportunity to participate in an abundance of virtual conferences and meetings, including:

- **Dr Lesley Gittings** and research assistant **Nokubonga Ralayo** delivered a presentation to the University of Oxford’s Centre for Evidence Based Intervention lunchtime series on the experiences of South African adolescents and young people during COVID-19 lockdown.
- The latest findings on the Ethiopian Health Extension Programme by Dr William Rudgard (Oxford) and UCT doctoral candidate **Silinganisiwe Dzumbunu** were shared at a policy engagement webinar with UNICEF Ethiopia.
- At a UNICEF ESARO webinar, titled “Adolescent and Young Mums affected by HIV”, **A/Prof Elona Toska** and Oxford PhD candidate Nontokozo Langwenya presented on HEY BABY findings, sharing key regional learning on how to strengthen HIV and health services for adolescent and young mothers and their children. Find the recording of the webinar [here](#) (HEY BABY from 16:31).
- **Dr Boladé Hamed Banougnin** and **A/Prof Elona Toska** presented, in French and English, findings on adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV) to UNAIDS in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The evidence update reported on findings from four main topics including (1) adolescent viral load suppression, (2) adolescent HIV prevention, (3) the association between adolescent pregnancy, motherhood and HIV, and (4) adolescent life goals and aspirations. The analysis mainly used data from the Mzantsi Wakho study.

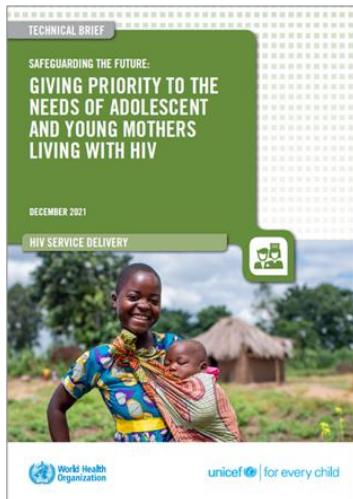
- The United Nations Population Fund, the Human Sciences Research Council, and the South African Department of Science and Innovation hosted a webinar titled 'It is okay not to be okay', exploring mental health and coping skills among the youth amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Doctoral candidate **Angelique Thomas** gave a presentation titled “Navigating Lockdowns: mental health challenges and resilience among young people during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa”.



- November’s Paediatric-Adolescent Treatment Africa (PATA) Summit was attended by nearly 2,000 healthcare workers in 12 countries. This year’s theme was “Clinic and Community in Conversation – Closing the Gap for Children and Adolescents in the HIV Response”. The HEYBABY team presented research on the experiences of nurses. **A/Prof Elona Toska** and Dr. Christina Laurenzi (Stellenbosch University) co-organised and presented a session on gender-based violence and HIV.

(Photo: HEY BABY team, Eastern Cape)





- **A/Prof Elona Toska** gave the keynote address at a satellite event co-hosted by UNICEF and the World Health Organization at the International Conference on HIV/AIDS and STIs (ICASA) held in Durban/virtually in early December 2021. The satellite also launched a [technical brief](#) informed by the HEY BABY and ABCD teams' research.

- Prof. Lorraine Sherr (University College London), **Dr. Wylene Saal** (UCT postdoctoral fellow) and Dr. Christina Laurenzi (Stellenbosch University) presented on their work on adolescent pregnancy, early motherhood and HIV at the Viiv Healthcare grand rounds.

In early May, the ParentApp team, supported at UCT by **Lauren Baerecke, Kanyisile Brukwe, Nicole Chetty** and **Jonathan Klapwijk**, released a re-designed beta version of the app to more than 20 families



across Africa who are participating in a user testing pilot. ParentApp is an Android app version of the PLH Sinovuyo Teen programme that aims to increase the availability of parenting support for vulnerable families at scale. The new design delivers an engaging 12-week online parenting programme via weekly workshops, on-demand resources, and a fun habit-tracking tool. Participants' feedback, shared through a series of online surveys and in-depth interviews, is needed to assess the usability, acceptability and satisfaction of the new design amongst target users. The developers are using the feedback to improve the user experience as the team gear up to pilot ParentApp in South Africa in collaboration with CWBSA, the South African Department of Social Development and local implementing partners.

AARHub researchers adapted to the pandemic, developing innovative research methodologies, particularly with regard to adolescent engagement. This work was the focus of a roundtable at the NVivo conference in September where **Dr Lesley Gittings** (postdoctoral research fellow), **Nokubonga Ralayo** (research assistant) and **Dr Hlengiwe Sacolo** (postdoctoral research fellow) presented a webinar and two working papers (one published and one forthcoming). Their work is also being written up as a toolkit (for open access sharing) and publication, led by **Dr Lesley Gittings**.

The yearend brought the well-deserved news of an ad hominem promotion for unit Director **Elona Toska** to Associate Professor. Additionally, **Professor Cathy Ward** (pictured alongside) was the recipient of the prestigious Alan Pifer Award in honour of her work developing the Parenting for Lifelong Health programme. The award is the Vice-Chancellor's annual prize in recognition of outstanding welfare-related research, presented to a UCT researcher whose work has contributed to the advancement and welfare of South Africa's disadvantaged people. Read UCT News' interview with Prof Ward about the award [here](#).



The Safety and Violence Initiative (SaVI)



SaVI was established as one of four 'Strategic Initiatives' by the then Vice-Chancellor (VC), Max Price, in 2011, with funding from the VC's office. SaVI's mission was to facilitate research and interventions across and beyond the university, in order to understand more fully and respond more effectively to violence and the absence of safety in South Africa and other African countries. In October 2012, Dr Guy Lamb was appointed as the SaVI Director.

For almost exactly a decade, SaVI facilitated debate, research and interventions across the university. It initiated and managed interdisciplinary research projects around a range of topics including violence against women and children, xenophobic violence, community policing, campus safety, firearm violence, urban planning and safety, and climate change resilience. SaVI has worked closely with all levels of government as well as civil society organisations in South Africa, and to a lesser extent in other African countries. SaVI researchers provided support for and made major presentations to the Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Police Inefficiency and a Breakdown in Relations between SAPS and the Community in Khayelitsha in 2013-14. SaVI's work significantly informed the national government's White Paper on Safety and Security (2016), the Western Cape Community Safety Act, and the Western Cape Government's Anti-Gangsterism Strategy (2017) and Safety Plan (2019). Between 2017 and 2019 SaVI worked closely with the South African Cities Network to provide research and capacity-building support to senior safety and security officials in South Africa's major cities. SaVI was also responsible for compiling the detailed (and high profile) annual State of Urban Safety in South Africa Report. SaVI has been active in various international networks, such as the WHO Violence Prevention Alliance and the Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association. SaVI has also hosted an annual national conference on violence prevention. These have been consistently well-attended.

SaVI moved into the CSSR in 2018 after it became clear that its previous location in the Law Faculty was not ideal. In 2019-20, SaVI continued to conduct research on, inter alia, the determinants of xenophobic violence and social cohesion in four provinces across South Africa (with funding from USAID). SaVI directed and managed (in partnership with national government) the SaferSpaces web portal on violence prevention in South Africa (with funding from GIZ). SaferSpaces is an online knowledge sharing and networking portal for community safety as well as violence and crime prevention practitioners from government, civil society and researchers. In 2020 and 2021, SaferSpaces featured a special COVID-19 theme and worked closely with GIZ and the Civilian Secretariat for Police Services to develop a detailed handbook for the implementation of the White Paper on Safety and Security. In partnership with Waves for Change (and with funding provided by AFD), SaVI also piloted a programme that used smartphone technology to provide incentives for individuals in low-income areas to establish activities that contributed to community safety.

SaVI's core operations were funded by the university. In 2019, the university communicated its intention to terminate financial support to SaVI at the end of 2020. The Director of SaVI, Guy Lamb, took up a position at Stellenbosch University in 2020 but retained a part-time contract position in the CSSR to enable him to wrap up existing projects. In mid-2021, Guy's contract and the contracts for the remaining two junior researchers terminated. SaVI's administrator Lameez Mota, who had managed SaVI's operations since 2012, took a retrenchment package. In recognition of his work with SaVI, Guy was appointed as a Commissioner on the National Planning Commission by President Ramaphosa in December 2021.

We anticipate, however, that SaVI will be resuscitated under Professor Cathy Ward (from the Department of Psychology). The new SaVI will focus on preventing violence against children and youth violence, with a strong emphasis on creating opportunities for career development for early career researchers. Its initial work will focus on developing low-cost parenting programmes to prevent violence against children. Building on the in-person [Parenting for Lifelong Health programmes](#), digital versions will be piloted. These will include: ParentText, which uses low-bandwidth text messages and allows interaction with a chatbot; ParentChat, which will take the form of facilitated groups on apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram; and ParentApp, which will allow for interaction with the app offline, as well as with other parents when online. Whilst the development of the digital innovations was facilitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely to have benefits that outlast the pandemic. These versions of the programmes may inevitably be lighter-touch than in-person programmes but are likely to be far more scaleable.

The Sustainable Societies Unit (SSU)

Research within the SSU focuses on the social and institutional dimensions of economic development and the interaction between human society and the natural world.

In 2021 SSU director **Beatrice Conradie** continued her work on agricultural productivity. Her biggest project of the year originated in an invitation from David Zilberman of Berkley to join a team to review South African literature that had implications for food security in a time of climate change. Nick Vink of Stellenbosch University and Nicolette Mathews of Free State University were involved too. This piece will appear in the *Annual Review of Resource Economics* in October 2022. Smallholder agriculture is severely under-researched and the national productivity time series, last updated in 2010, showed a lull in productivity since 1989.

The SSU has for many years conducted research in sheep-farming districts of the Karoo. Given restrictions, its work in the Karoo in 2021 entailed analysis rather than new data collection. Beatrice completed a new analysis of farm profitability before and during the drought and is completing a second paper with Jenifer Piesse on the effect of climate change adaptations on farm level productivity.

Sixteen new districts have been added to the historical productivity map. Together with Colin Thirtle, formerly of Imperial College London, Beatrice is investigating the legacy of the 1952 wool boom in the three districts of Calvinia, Carnarvon and Beaufort West.

Exceptional rainfall in the Karoo, late 2021		
Date	Coverage (%)	Mean precipitation (mm)
22 October	84	26
29 October	73	9
9-10 November	81	10
27 November	72	13
5-6 December	84	30



Rain falls rarely in the Karoo. Over six weeks in late 2021, however, the Karoo experienced five major and widespread rainfall events. The total of more than 80 mm by 6 December was already more than the total annual rainfall for either 2019 or 2020 in Laingsburg. Surviving shrubs sprouted and set seed and perennial grasses resprouted and recruited, although the shrubs that form the bulk of sheep diet require continued rainfall before showing significant new growth at the end of summer.

This underscores the importance of precise climate change measurements. Beatrice, together with Johann Strauss of the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and Jenifer Piesse, published a paper in the *South African Journal of Science* on the effects of climate on productivity in the region. Andrea Renner – working under Beatrice’s supervision – incorporated climate variables in her model of productivity in the dairy industry. Beatrice also co-supervised two students working on smallholder dairy projects in Madagascar (Amy Thom) and Eswatini (Bandile Mdluli).

Nicoli Natrass also picked up on the issue of climate change, publishing a paper on the commodification of wildlife in the Anthropocene, and another warning about the impact of COVID-19 travel restrictions on community-based conservation in Namibia. This was part of her ongoing collaboration with UCT’s Institute for Communities and Wildlife (iCWild). Unfortunately, climate change – and a marked lack of preparedness for it – affected UCT and iCWild specifically when some of iCWild’s offices were destroyed, along with UCT’s Jagger Library, in the April fire.

Nicoli, together with Jeremy Seekings, wrote a series of eight online media articles (in GroundUp, the Daily Maverick and News24) on the government’s COVID-19 vaccine rollout. They argued that the national Department of Health was slowing down the rollout, apparently in order to maintain a high level of centralised control over the process and to use it to prepare for the proposed national health insurance system. Fortunately, in response to criticism from many sides and subversion from doctors, nurses and ordinary people, the national Department of Health abandoned one after another of its excessive attempts to over-manage the rollout. Nicoli and Jeremy’s full analysis has been accepted in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Nicoli also published work with Brazilian co-authors about leadership failures plaguing Brazil’s response to COVID-19.

Nicoli and Jeremy also published a paper on the rise of worker co-operatives in the South African clothing industry, in the *Review of African Political Economy*.

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Plugging the Welfare Gap: The Role of Kinship Transfers in South Africa
Ralph Abbey Ssebaga
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District-level agricultural total factor productivity for the Karoo, South Africa: 1952–2002
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ABSTRACT
An earlier study of district-level agricultural total factor productivity in the Western Cape province of South Africa Conradie et al. (2019) extended to include eleven Northern Cape districts that in total make up the Karoo. Tornqvist Theil total factor productivity indices are calculated using accounting data from 10 years' census between 1949/50 and 2001/2. The Northern Cape experienced the same general productivity decline as the Western Cape's Central Karoo. Both parts of the broader Karoo show a similar mean rate of decline. However, the reasons are different, with developments in irrigation systems a major factor in the Northern Cape.

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Cooperatives and the reorganisation of labour-intensive production in South Africa's clothing industry
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Political discourse, denialism and leadership failure in Brazil's response to COVID-19
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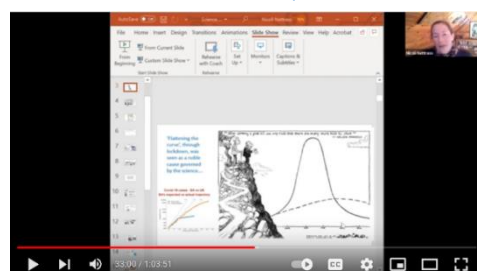
Seminars (with URLs to youtube video recordings)

25 May: Dr Jane Kelly (Accelerate Hub, CSSR): '[Narratives of gang desistance amongst former gang members](#)'



8 June: Dr Cleopas Sambo (University of Zambia): '[Poverty as suffering involving psychosocial pain and ontological insecurity](#)'.

10 August: Prof Nicoli Natrass (CSSR): '[Science, high modernism, and state failure in South Africa's response to COVID](#)'.



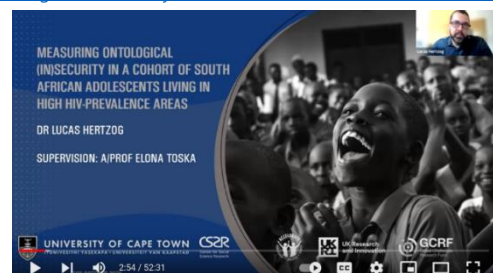
24 August: John Spyropoulos (PhD student, Sociology, UCT): '[The experience of money and transitioning to adulthood in the time of COVID](#)'.

7 September: Vayda Megannon (PhD student, Sociology and CSSR): '[Access to and use of the COVID-19 Special Relief of Distress Grant: Personal experiences](#)'.



28 September: Prof Amanda Gouws (Stellenbosch): '[The gendered effects of COVID on care](#)'.

26 October Dr Lucas Hertzog (Accelerate Hub, CSSR): '[Measuring ontological \(in\)security in a cohort of South African adolescents](#)'.



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ABOUT THE CSSR

The Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR) is an interdisciplinary research centre at the University of Cape Town dedicated to conducting and building capacity for systematic, policy-relevant social science research in South Africa, the region and across Africa. Substantively, the CSSR conducts research in the broad areas of development, poverty, public health, safety and violence, and social relationships and intimacy. The CSSR presently consists of the Adolescent Accelerators Research Hub (AARHub), the Safety and Violence Initiative (SaVI), and the Sustainable Societies Unit (SSU) as well as a small Directorate. Methodologically, our research is empirical and problem-driven. We utilise both quantitative and qualitative strategies of data collection. CSSR projects are usually team-oriented, bringing together multiple local and international researchers, and offering post-graduate students significant opportunities for hands-on training by involving them in all stages of projects. Research findings are presented and discussed at regular weekly seminars and published as CSSR Working Papers.



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