# Centre for Social Science Research ANNUAL REPORT 2020





Promoting Evidence-Based Research and Public Policy

# **Director's report**

The activity of the CSSR in 2020 was, of course, framed by COVID lockdowns of the University of Cape Town and South Africa as a whole. One of the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 at UCT was a CSSR-based visitor who had recently travelled from Europe, and another was a recently appointed CSSR staff member. The CSSR was therefore shut down prior to the national and University-wide Lockdowns. From mid-March, seminars and workshops were cancelled or postponed; fieldwork, training and outreach activities were suspended; face-toface meetings became impossible. The CSSR did not reopen for in-person activities during the year, reflecting the continued closure of the university as a whole.

For the rest of 2020, therefore, CSSR researchers and administrators worked from home. Our research was obviously constrained by restrictions on travel and face-to-face contact, but we persevered with other modes of research, and we wrote up prior research. Our projects required ongoing administration. All of this had to be done in the context of familial responsibilities and the challenging local and global environment. Meetings including selection committees for appointments to new posts – were held virtually. Webinars replaced seminars. Some (but not all) staff were able to work efficiently and full-time from home, although everyone was paid fully. Supplementary arrangements had to be made to cover costs of internet connectivity and, in some cases, childcare (following funder procedures).

Most of our researchers – and the administrators supporting them – rose to the occasion, as the publication record for the year suggests. CSSR researchers published a total of 13 book chapters, 31 articles in peer-reviewed journals, 7 Working Papers and an extraordinary 25 media articles. Whilst no books were published this year, the output of articles and book chapters exceeded any previous year.

The COVID crisis did result in financial difficulties for the CSSR although these will hit us hardest from 2021 onwards rather than in 2020. Some of our funding was cut back sharply. The most devastating cuts resulted from the British Government's slashing of the budget for major development-oriented research initiatives, which meant that the budget for the Accelerate Hub would be cut back severely in 2021 and with no funding committed for 2022-2024. The CSSR has not yet found a source of core funding to fill the gap left by the termination of support from the Mellon Foundation (which had supported us generously since the establishment of the CSSR). The Humanities Faculty assisted us through most of 2020 by paying the salary of one part-time administrator. Whilst the Accelerate Hub has an astounding record in fund-raising – even whilst its major funder has cut back - other units in the CSSR have struggled to raise the project funding required to sustain their research programmes.

Expenditure by the CSSR in 2020 amounted to about R 25 million (excluding salaries paid directly by the university) - more than in any previous year, due to the considerable funds raised and spent through the Accelerate Hub.

The year was marred also by the death, in September, of James Jackson, formerly of the University of Michigan in the USA. James was director of the Institute for Social Research at Michigan from 2005 to 2015. Like his predecessor, David Featherman, James was a strong supporter of and friend to the CSSR. In 2010, James flew from the USA to Cape Town to participate in the second institutional review of the CSSR. James himself was a pioneer in quantitative research into the lives of black Americans, including on their migration within the USA or from other parts of the world to the USA. We salute James's scholarly and other contributions.

Jeremy Seetings.

Jeremy Seekings (Director)

# The size and shape of the CSSR

The CSSR has always comprised semi-autonomous units and miscellaneous other projects. Over the past twenty years, a number of units have left the CSSR to become free-standing groupings. In 2017, one unit and other projects left the CSSR to form the core of a new Institute for Democracy, Citizenship and Public Policy in Africa (IDCPPA). CSSR researchers also helped to establish the Institute for Communities and Wildlife in Africa (iCWild).

During 2020, the CSSR comprised five research units:

- The Families and Society Research Unit (FaSRU, headed by A/Prof Elena Moore),
- the **AIDS and Society Research Unit** (ASRU, headed by Dr Rebecca Hodes),
- the **Sustainable Societies Unit** (SSU, headed by A/Prof Beatrice Conradie),
- the **Safety and Violence Initiative** (SaVI, headed by Dr Guy Lamb) and
- the Accelerate Hub (i.e. Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents, headed by Dr Elona Toska).

Two of the unit heads held full-time, permanent positions in teaching departments (A/Profs Moore and Conradie, in Sociology and Economics respectively). At the start of the year, Guy Lamb was funded as part of the university's support for SaVI. Guy took up a position at Stellenbosch University in mid-2020 but retained a part-time contract position at UCT in order to supervise SaVI. Drs Toska and Hodes held permanent but softfunded positions (as Senior Research Officers). Jeremy Seekings held a half-time departmental position (in Sociology). Nicoli Nattrass also held a half-time departmental position (in Economics). All other CSSR researchers were funded entirely from research grants. For most of the year, therefore, our researchers held the equivalent of three posts funded by the university.

The Humanities Faculty also pays the salary for one finance officer and, as an emergency measure in 2020, paid for most of the salary of one part-time administrator (both posts shared with IDCPPA). The university paid for part of the salary of the SaVI administrator.

The administrative team in the CSSR and IDCPPA underwent some changes during the year. The contraction of SaVI and expansion of the Accelerate Hub meant that we transferred some responsibilities between administrative staff. Lameez Mota assumed responsibility for the IDCPPA in addition to her continuing responsibilities in SaVI, whilst Becky Maughan-Brown (formerly in the IDCPPA) took over the administration of the Accelerate Hub. Nicci Scheepers (finance officer), Dumi Hlwele (part-time front-office administration) and Thobani Ncapai (part-time fieldworker) continued to work for both the CSSR and IDCPPA. Bridgit Davis continued to work part-time as editor of our Working Papers and other written work.

The establishment of the Accelerate Hub necessitated a series of new dedicated administrative appointments for the Hub specifically: Lauren Baerecke was appointed to manage the Parenting for Lifelong Health App Development project, Nosiphiwo Lawrence continued as coordinator for the adolescent engagement project, Akhona Mfeketo continued as senior finance officer, Diana Ocholla continued as communications coordinator, Amanda Swartz was appointed as administrative assistant and Raylene Titus was appointed as junior information officer.

On the research side, the Accelerate Hub employed five research officers: Ms Genevieve Haupt-Ronnie, Dr Lucas Hertzog-Ramos, Ms Nontokozo Langwenya, Dr Hillary Musarurwa and Dr Jane Kelly (in addition to Elona Toska herself). The Hub also had five post-doctoral research fellows: Dr Omololu Aluko (until the end of September), Dr Lesley Gittings (co-appointed with ASRU), Dr Kufre Okop, Dr Wylene Saal and Dr Hlengiwe Sacolo. A number of junior researchers were also employed as contract research assistants either full- or parttime. Azwi Netshiwulwe and Lauren October worked in SaVI. Makhosazana Shabalala worked part-time in FaSRU (until she tragically passed away in September). Mumta Hargovan worked in ASRU. The Hub employed Nicole Chetty, Silinganisiwe Dzumbunu, Jane Mbithi, Zarah Abba Omar, Nokubonga Ralayo, Angelique Thomas, Siyanai Zhou and Vayda Megannon.

# COVID-19, lockdown and the CSSR

The closure of the university and then the South Africa-wide 'lockdown' in March 2020 severely disrupted the work of the CSSR in two respects. First, most fieldwork had to be suspended. Fieldwork - to collect both quantitative and qualitative data - constitutes the foundation of research in the CSSR. Under the circumstances, most CSSR researchers have concentrated primarily on writing up research that has already been conducted (or which can be conducted from home, mainly online).

Secondly, the CSSR was unable to play its customary role as a space for the formal and informal face-to-face interactions between researchers that are integral to a healthy community of scholars. Virtual meetings allowed some interaction - thanks to the efforts of the staff who steered the use of new technologies - but virtual engagements proved to be a poor substitute for face-to-face ones.

CSSR researchers actively took up the challenge of contributing to research and public debate around the effects of COVID-19 and appropriate policy responses. Researchers wrote a steady stream of online articles (for sites including GroundUp and the Daily Maverick) and new Working Papers, contributed to educational materials, and worked on academic papers.

Elena Moore published a series of online articles on the effects of COVID-19 on care and money within households. Successive articles looked at households where someone received an old age grant, multigenerational households and their family dynamics, deepening racial disparities among children (written with Nonzuzo Mbokazi, who completed her PhD during the year) and the tensions within households that might be exacerbated when grants increased unevenly. Elena also co-authored articles on the roles played by grandparents in the face of COVID, and on funerals and farewells during the pandemic. FaSRU also initiated a research project on how families and households have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst also examining how social protection is responding to and supporting vulnerable persons and households. This work tracked the impact of COVID-19 on a sample of 140 urban households that had been interviewed in 2018-19, i.e. prior to the pandemic. FaSRU also ran a monthly e-seminar series on COVID-19 and family dynamics.

The government's reforms of social protection were also examined critically by Jeremy Seekings in a series of online articles. He examined the reforms announced in April, how an emergency grant could be implemented (written with Lena Gronbach and Nicoli Nattrass), the delay in rolling out the new grant, the government's failure to get food to people who needed it, and government officials' practice of 'passing the buck' rather than taking responsibility for delivery failures. Jeremy also contributed 'expert' affidavits in the court cases brought successfully by civil society organisations against the Ministers of Basic Education and Social Development to secure the reopening of school and preschool feeding schemes.

Lena Gronbach also wrote an online article on the PostBank's role in delivering social grants. A series of CSSR Working Papers examined the options for social protection reform, the sorry story of feeding schemes, and the slow rollout of emergency social cash transfers. Jeremy and Nicoli (Nattrass) wrote an article on the politics of COVID in South Africa for the Journal of Democracy.

The Accelerate Hub collaborated with Parenting for Lifelong Health, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other international partners to produce a set of one-page tips for parents – translated into many languages – on how to cope with the challenges of parenting during the COVID-19 crisis.

Parenting during COVID-19 can be extra hard. It's normal to feel stressed and overwhelmed. Here are 6 tips to make things easier for you and your children. The Accelerate Hub also collaborated with PATA (Paediatric Adolescent Treatment for Africa) to develop an Evidence Brief pictured below.



### Evidence brief: Caring during COVID-19: Supporting mental health among vulnerable adolescents and young people

- At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is changing service delivery and disrupting access to health care, we need to roll out solutions to support access to services for the most vulnerable within and beyond facilities.
- Access to mental health services and psychosocial support is critical for adolescent mothers living with HIV, but also limited.
- · Mobile-based solutions can equip peer facilitators with the training and tools to provide first-line mental health support to young mothers affected by HIV.
- These solutions should be rapidly tested and rolled out to meet the growing needs of this population.

DOWNLOAD THE EVIDENCE BRIEF

Guy Lamb published an Op-Ed on 'Fear and Policing in the Time of COVID-19'. In this, he discusses the dynamics behind the aggressive and abusive behaviour of some of the South African security forces during the lockdown period. Guy also participated in a number of live radio and television broadcasts. SaVI published a SaferSpaces newsletter focused on police and violence prevention in relation to the COVID-19 lockdown regulations.

In 2020, ASRU completed a collaboration with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to combine the quantitative results from Household Prevalence Surveys with the qualitative findings from the Mzantsi Wakho study, to provide a comprehensive account of the challenges and needs of HIV-positive adolescents in South Africa. From March 2020, ASRU's Rebecca Hodes volunteered for the Western Cape Department of Health to conduct COVID case and contact-tracing under the aegis of the Province's Emergency Response. Hodes joined a case and contact-tracing pod organised by UCT's Centre for Infectious Diseases and Epidemiological Research. Hodes went on to work for the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition on projects funded by UNAIDS and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to capture the impacts of COVID on people living with HIV and TB in the global south. Results of this work, which focused on the experiences and needs of key populations, are available as online reports and presentations.

In 2020, Rebecca Hodes published an article on 'Bad medicine: the past and present toxic "cures", reflecting on the histories of toxic healthcare promotion by political officials and scientists in the United States and South Africa. She also contributed to a series on COVID-19: Collective Experiences During a Global Pandemic and was interviewed on Cape Talk about anti-vaccination myths. ASRU researchers also presented work at the COVID-19/IAS virtual conference in July, including work on pictograms to promote public health in the COVID pandemic (see pictogram below and Viral Visuals.pdf). Working together with pharmacists based within UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences and at Rhodes University, ASRU adapted the ART-adherence pictogram to support medicinestaking among a wider, global audience, and across social media platforms.



COVID pictogram to promote medicines-taking and public health within contexts of high communicable and non-communicable disease endemicity

# Other activities by CSSR units and researchers



The AIDS and Society Research Unit (ASRU) continues to conduct research into the health outcomes and sexual and reproductive care experiences of people with HIV. ASRU is the founding home at UCT of the Mzantsi Wakho study, focusing on antiretroviral treatment adherence among young people, and of the qualitative component of the Hey Baby (Helping Empower Youth Brought up in Adversity with their Babies and Young children) study. ASRU was awarded UCT's Social Responsiveness Award in March 2020, in recognition of the social impacts of the Mzantsi Wakho study, and particularly through the use of qualitative, participatory research methods to inform South Africa's National Adolescent and Youth Health Policy.

Prior to COVID, ASRU was working on two primary projects:

- 1. Designing a pharmaceutical pictogram to support adherence to medicines among HIV-positive youth;
- 2. Combining the quantitative results from five of the HSRC's Household Prevalence Surveys with the qualitative data of the Mzantsi Wakho study to capture and share findings on the health needs and challenges of South African youth.

Both projects continued during the lockdown, incorporating research on both the global and local effects of COVID-19.

The Families and Society Research Unit (FaSRU) continues to conduct research on intergenerational relations, cultural practices and constitutional principles concerning the 'family'. 'Pre-COVID' research continued alongside the COVID-related research reported above. Three FaSRU students completed their postgraduate studies during the first half of this year. Nonzuzo Mbokazi completed her doctoral degree on 'Understanding Childcare Choices amongst Low-Income Employed Mothers in Urban and Rural KwaZulu-Natal.' Vayda Megannon and Jill Samukimba both obtained distinctions for their masters' theses (Vayda on inheritance amongst Muslim women in Cape Town and Jill on the whether the payment of inhlawulo - i.e. payments by the fathers to unmarried women who become pregnant – affects their involvement in children's lives, amongst isiXhosa men in Cape Town). Jill and Elena co-authored a Working Paper on inhlawulo and its implications for how we retheorise fathering and masculinity from an African perspective. Vayda also published a Working Paper.

Elena, together with Professor Debora Price from the University of Manchester, applied successfully to the UK Academy of Medical Sciences for a GCRF networking grant to develop a network on Elderly Care and Social Protection across Southern Africa. The award letter stated that the grant-awarding panel had been particularly 'impressed with the multidisciplinary objectives described in the proposal', the 'plans to enhance dialogue with policy making processes through the involvement of government and NGOs' and the potential to generalise findings to other geographical areas. Other funding applications were unfortunately unsuccessful.





The Safety and Violence Initiative (SaVI) was involved in two new projects. The Waves for Change project sought to establish a proof of concept for its 'Teampact' app. This smartphone app aims to modify the way in which community-based interventions can be initiated, financed and tracked. Teampact uses time and geostamped photos taken by a smartphone to activate, monitor and reward community-based mentors providing physical activity programmes in typically remote areas. SaVI conducted quantitative and qualitative research prior to COVID - in the Southern Cape to gauge the efficacy of the app. Together with Waves for Change and the Chrysalis Academy, SaVI sought to expand the intervention in the Western Cape.

SaVI is also involved in a GCRF-funded project in collaboration with UCT-based Future Water, the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation and the University of the Western Cape. This 'Fire and Water' project focuses on Delft, Overcome Heights, and Sweet Home Farm (Cape Flats). It aims to address environmental hazards affecting these communities; improve wellbeing, resilience and livelihoods; and create alternative development pathways for sustainability by mobilising local knowledges and multi-literacies. The project will run until November 2023. The research process was initiated in the first half of 2020, with survey research conducted by telephone and smartphone platforms due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

SaVI also continues to be active in 'engaged scholarship'. SaVI manages the SaferSpaces web portal (a collaborative project with the Civilian Secretariat for Police Services, with funding from the German GIZ, i.e., the German Society for International Cooperation). SaferSpaces is an online knowledge-sharing and networking portal for community safety, as well as for violence- and crime-prevention practitioners from government, civil society and the research community in South Africa.

Sustainable Societies Unit (SSU) researchers Beatrice Conradie and Nicoli Nattrass had heavy teaching loads in the first semester, leaving little time for research. Beatrice's research continued to focus on productivity in the wine, fruit and sheep farming industries across the Western Cape. After struggling to conduct a fifth wave of her Karoo Management Survey telephonically, Beatrice waited until she could resume in-person re-interviews. The new questionnaire included several COVID-related items. In an article published in Agrekon, Wustro and Conradie found that farmers' risk perceptions (prior to COVID) were stable but also highly responsive to current issues, especially of a political nature.

Nicoli Nattrass's fieldwork - mostly conducted with the Institute for Communities and Wildlife in Africa (iCWild) – was also suspended due to lockdown. The publication of a two-page commentary by Nicoli in the South African Journal of Science prompted a public furore and an online special issue comprising responses to the commentary together with a detailed rejoinder by Nicoli. Nicoli also wrote a series of articles in the media on aspects of the controversy.





The **Accelerate Hub** – i.e., the Oxford-based Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents Hub is funded under the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and co-led at UCT by Elona Toska and Professor Cathy Ward (Psychology). The objective of the interdisciplinary team was to generate evidence on which development accelerators - alone and in synergy with each other - can support adolescents in Africa to reach multiple Sustainable Development Goals such as health, safety, schooling, nutrition and employment. The Accelerate Hub team also received a substantial grant from the Oak Foundation for advocacy and policy engagement around violence prevention, funding from the European Research Commission for the quantitative component of HEY BABY, and an award from the NIH/Fogarty International Centre for administrative support.

In January, the Accelerate Hub hosted a three-day meeting (pictured below) to discuss the first year of the Hub's work. The meeting, at the UCT Graduate School of Business's Conference Centre, was attended by about eighty participants from more than ten countries.





In March, just prior to lockdown, the Hub held a Narrative and Adolescence workshop (pictured above), focusing on how adolescents across the African continent use storytelling, performance and a range of narrative forms and patterns to understand their worlds and their place in it (read the full report here).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Accelerate Hub research team explored and co-designed remote research methods. A series of workshops focused on research under COVID.

Nine Hub researchers facilitated a "Research to policy and implementation" session for 65 UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa HIV and social protection officers. Hub researchers have made over a dozen presentations (e.g., Alien Time Capsules pictured below) in webinars as well as five presentations (poster and oral) at the AIDS2020 virtual conference. Elona guest-edited a special issue of the Journal of the International AIDS Society on 'Shifting Paradigms: Holistic and Empowering Approached for Adolescent HIV'.



# **CSSR Publications 2020**

### **Edited journal special issue**

Archary, M., A.E. Pettifor and E. Toska (eds), 'Shifting paradigms: Holistic and empowering approaches for adolescent HIV', Journal of the International AIDS Society 23,s5 (September).

### **Book chapters**

Gittings, L., Hodes, R., Colvin, C. and Zungu, M. 'Things less spoken: HIV research with adolescent boys and young men implications for theory, policy and practice', in K. Govender and N.K. Poku (eds), Preventing HIV Among Young People in Southern and Eastern Africa (Abingdon: Routledge).

Hodes, R., Vale, B. and Toska, E. 'The misclosure of an adolescent's HIV-status', in Nolwazi Mkhwanazi and Lenore Manderson (eds), Connected Lives: Families, Households, Health and Care in Contemporary South Africa (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press. ISBN: 978-0-7969-25875-5), Case Study 5.3.

Hodes, R. 'The grants shopping basket', in Nolwazi Mkhwanazi and Lenore Manderson (eds), Connected Lives: Families, Households, Health and Care in Contemporary South Africa (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press. ISBN: 978-0-7969-25875-5), Case Study 4.3.

Lamb, G. 'Dismantling the State Security Apparatus', in CEVRO (ed.), Memory of Nations: Democratic Transition Guide - The South African Experience (Prague: CEVRO), pp. 7-17.

Moore, E. "Your Surroundings Don't Make You; You Must Rise above all that": The Home in Life Histories as Site of Resistance to Racial Violence, Cape Town, South Africa', in K. Van Walraven (ed.), The Individual in African History. The Importance of Biography in African Historical Studies (Leiden: Brill), pp. 70-90.

Moore, E. 'Divorce, Emotions, and Legal Regulations: Shared Parenting in a Climate of Fear', in Michaela Kreyenfeld and Heike Treppe (eds), Parental Life Courses after Separation and Divorce in Europe (Springer Open), pp. 131-147.

Seekings, J. 'Welfare Politics in Africa', in Nic Cheeseman (ed.), Oxford Encyclopedia of African Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0190632342).

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Seekings, J. 'Voters, Parties and Elections in Zambia', in Tinenenji Banda, O'Brien Kaaba, Marja Hinfelaar and Muna Ndulo (eds), Democracy and Electoral Politics in Zambia (Leiden: Brill. ISBN 978-90-04-42502-6), pp. 116-145.

Seekings, J. 'The Effects of Colonialism on Social Protection in South Africa and Botswana', in Carina Schmitt (ed.), From Colonialism to International Aid: External Actors and Social Protection in the Global South (Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN 978-3-030-38199-8), pp. 109-35.

Seekings, J. 'Reformulating the "Social Question" in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Zola Skweyiya, Dignity, Development and the Welfare State', in Lutz Leisering (ed.), One Hundred Years of Social Security: The Changing Social Question in Brazil, India, China, and South Africa (London: Palgrave, ISBN 978-3-030-54958-9), pp. 263-299.

Seekings, J. 'The Social Question in Pre-apartheid' South Africa: Race, Religion and the State', in Lutz Leisering (ed.), One Hundred Years of Social Security: The Changing Social Question in Brazil, India, China, and South Africa (London: Palgrave. ISBN 978-3-030-54958-9), pp. 191-220.

Zungu, N., Toska, E., Gittings, L. and Hodes, R. 'Closing the gap in programming for adolescents living with HIV in Eastern and Southern Africa', in K. Govender and N.K. Poku (eds), Preventing HIV Among Young People in Southern and Eastern Africa (Abingdon: Routledge. ISBN: 978-042-946281-8), pp. 243-259.

## **Articles in peer-reviewed journals**

Archary, M., Pettifor, A.E. and Toska, E. 'Adolescents and young people at the centre: global perspectives and approaches to transform HIV testing, treatment and care', Journal of the International AIDS Society 23(s5): e25581.

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Conradie, B. 'Incorporating extension measures into farm productivity models with practical guidelines for extension staff', South African Journal of Agricultural Extension 48(1): 17-30. doi.org 10.17159/2413-3221/2020v48n1a023

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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, social relationships and intimacy. The CSSR presently consists of the Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents (Accelerate) Hub, the AIDS and Society Research Unit (ASRU), the Families and Societies Research Unit (FaSRU), 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.



### CENTRE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

University of Cape Town • Private Bag Rondebosch 7701 • South Africa
Tel: 021 950 4656 • Web: www.cssr.uct.ac.za

