



Briefing Note

AIDS, Security and Conflict Initiative

The AIDS, Security and Conflict Initiative (ASCI) is a global research initiative convened by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' and the Social Science Research Council. ASCI is supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Australian Agency for International Development, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNAIDS.

Starting in September 2006, ASCI began a process of research and mobilization bringing together an international network of researchers, policy makers and practitioners across geographic regions and specialist fields. ASCI aims to inform policy and programming by strengthening the evidence base and addressing critical gaps in knowledge across several areas:

- 1) HIV/AIDS in military and peacekeeping operations
- 2) HIV/AIDS, humanitarian crises and post-conflict transitions
- 3) HIV/AIDS and crisis states
- 4) Cross cutting issues, including gender, security sector reform and policing

While the worst fears about threats posed by HIV/AIDS to peace and security have not been realized, neither have the myriad challenges posed by the pandemic been resolved. These include the recognized issues of managing HIV/AIDS within the military and peacekeeping operations. It also includes integrating AIDS policies and programmes into security sector reforms, policing and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities. It includes the role of sexual violence in HIV transmission and the securitization of HIV/AIDS programmes and policies. Recognizing the complex relationship between HIV/AIDS and humanitarian crisis, ASCI will focus on the underlying drivers that exacerbate HIV rates in some situations while keeping it down in others, and it will assess how these drivers may increase HIV risks in post-conflict situations. ASCI is also concerned with the particular situations in which HIV/AIDS exacerbates state crisis and how, in these situations, HIV/AIDS policies and programmes are established and implemented.

ASCI's agenda is to sharpen the analysis of these very real problems and recommend policy and programme oriented responses. ASCI will actively seek opportunities to learn from and contribute to debates across humanitarian, human rights and security arenas and, under the guidance of an expert reference group, will bring together existing research and commission new studies. Key activities over the next 18 months include:

- inventory of existing research and data (*September 2006 – January 2008*)
- commissioning new research (*February 2007 – January 2008*)
- expert and peer review meetings (*September 2006 – February 2008*)
- working paper series with key research findings (*May 2007 – March 2008*)
- final policy report (*April 2008*)

This is a crucial moment to accelerate understanding of a rapidly evolving field now catapulted onto the world agenda. ASCI's contribution to this effort will be to offer new analyses of concrete challenges and to crystallize existing knowledge into more effective responses. For more information about ASCI, kindly contact asci@ssrc.org.

<http://asci.ssrc.org>