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HIV and AIDS REPORTER: focus on livelihood security, mobility and gender

20 February 2007

produced by the [IDS Health and Development Information](#) team in collaboration with [Eldis](#) and the [DFID Health Resource Centre](#)

This is our monthly email bulletin, bringing together research to inform policy debates on health in developing countries.

The HIV and AIDS Reporter aims to provide readers with a more in-depth look at a particular area of health policy. This month's theme is [Livelihood security, mobility and gender](#). The bulletin also features summaries of new documents and other additions to the [HIV and AIDS Resource Guide](#).

[HIV and AIDS Reporter archive](#) - an archive is now available on the HIV and AIDS Resource Guide. See previous issues of the HIV and AIDS Reporter at <http://www.eldis.org/health/archive.htm>

All documents listed below are available free on the web. If you are unable to access any of these materials online and would like to receive a copy of a document as an email attachment, please contact i.young@ids.ac.uk.

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Feature: Livelihood security, mobility and gender

Research has shown that mobility is a way in which individuals and households seek livelihood security, through temporary, permanent or seasonal migration to urban areas in a search for work. However, those who spend a lot of time away from home or who have multiple homes can result in wider social networks, increasing sexual networking and vulnerability to high risk encounters. As migrant workers are often socially and economically vulnerable, they may experience increased exploitation, harassment, and violence. All of these factors contribute to increased vulnerability to HIV infection, as well as lack of access to adequate treatment and care.

The increasing mobility of women means that the migrant population is becoming more diverse. While much research has been undertaken on the experience of male migrants socio-economic contexts, sexual networks, knowledge and sexual behaviours, much less is known about women's experiences and the gender-specific issues of migration, especially in the context of vulnerability to HIV. Increasingly, more women are migrating in search of economic security. They appear to have fewer options than men, and are often limited to unskilled work, domestic work and sex work.

One study on women street traders in South Africa and Uganda has shown that most live and work in poor areas and that their location of work at traffic intersections, truck stops and transport hubs results in high levels of violence, abuse and rape. In South Africa, many female street traders sleep in the street and are therefore increasingly vulnerable to HIV by having to do 'favours' (engage in sex) in exchange for accommodation or safety.

Mobility can make people more difficult to reach, whether for prevention education, condom provision, HIV testing or treatment and care. This can be seen through the experience of female domestic workers in South Africa, who have been shown to feel isolated and lack access to important information on HIV and AIDS education initiatives.

There is a significant lack of research on the role of sex work as a livelihood within the context of HIV. Research by Save the Children, focusing on the livelihoods of commercial sex workers in Binga, concluded that commercial sex work must be viewed from a livelihoods perspective if the underlying factors of vulnerability are to be addressed. The study points to a need for significantly scaling up the reach of HIV prevention activities with sex workers, as well as considering other forms of support, such as food aid.

For more information see:

- Southern African Migration Project (SAMP)
www.queensu.ca/samp/

Eldis Gender and HIV/AIDS Dossier: Migration

www.eldis.org/gender/dossiers/Migration.htm

Eldis Gender Guide: Migration

<http://eldis.org/gender/migration.htm>

- HIV and AIDS Resource Guide: Mobile populations
www.eldis.org/hivaids/vulnerability/mobile.htm

Recommended readings on Livelihood security, mobility and gender

1. Linking migration, HIV/AIDS and urban food security in southern and eastern Africa

Authors: Crush, J., Frayne, B. et al

Southern African Mobility Project (SAMP) 2006

This paper from the Regional Network on HIV/AIDS, Livelihoods and Food Security (RENEWAL) reviews the literature on migration, HIV and urban food security. The paper draws links between these three factors in the context of Southern and Eastern Africa. It outlines an action research agenda to inform policy and programming within these three interconnected sectors.

Recent research shows a change in the relationship between urban and rural households in this area. The direct transfer of food from rural to migrant urban households is now more significant than the flow of money from migrants back to their families in rural areas. Urban households are more dependent on this source for their food security than they are on exchange with other urban households or urban agriculture. HIV is disrupting this economy as its impact on rural communities is reducing food production. At the same time HIV is reducing the ability of people in urban areas to engage in urban agriculture, which contributes further to food insecurity in urban areas. The paper argues that the long term impact of HIV on development calls for a new approach to creating policies and programmes. It recommends further research on the links between urban and rural households, the different impact of HIV on food security in rural and urban households and potential interventions.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23417>

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2. Crossings: deadly links between mobility and HIV

Produced by: Southern African Mobility Project (SAMP), 2006

This newsletter, published by the Southern African Mobility Project (SAMP), examines the links between migration and HIV in Southern Africa. The collection of articles considers: the impact of HIV and child migration; the role of social networking and family relationships in coping with HIV; and the experiences of women street traders, truckers, miners and domestic workers and HIV. The authors outline how mobility can be linked to increased vulnerability to HIV in four ways: the wider social networks of migrants increase sexual networks; more mobile individuals engage in or are more vulnerable to high risk sexual behaviour; migrants are often more difficult to reach through interventions; and migrant communities are socially, economically and politically marginalised.

Mobility is the means by which many individuals and households seek security of income and livelihood: traders move between sources and markets, migrant workers go to mines, factories, towns and farms. Looking specifically at the experiences of women, both as street traders and

domestic workers, the authors find that mobility is that is essential to securing these women's individual and household livelihoods increases their vulnerability to HIV. Research found that lack of information on HIV was one of the main factors in making them more vulnerable highlighting the need for HIV education initiatives targeted at specific migrant communities.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23421>

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3. Bridge cutting edge pack: gender and migration

Authors: Jolly, S. and Reeves, H.

Produced by: Bridge, 2006

How does migration advance or impede gender equality? How can policy-makers and practitioners promote gender equality in work on migration? This report seeks to answer these questions by looking at both internal and international migration, regular and irregular migration, as well as across the spectrum from forced, such as trafficking, to voluntary migration. It explores the gendered patterns of migration, including how gender impacts on decisions to migrate in terms of who goes and why, and in turn how this affects the benefits and risks of migration for women and men, including impact on gender relations. How levels of development may influence migration decisions and the consequent impact are explored from a gender perspective, including a review of remittances, "brain drain" and HIV/AIDS.

The authors call for a gender-sensitive rights-based approach to migration that also recognises the development potential of migration. The key elements of such an approach could be:

- immigration and emigration policies that enable women as well as men to take up opportunities that safe and regular migration may offer
- mobilise around and support for international rights frameworks that offer protection for women migrants to ensure that governments ratify and adhere to such
- support for the acknowledgement and realisation of the rights of migrants throughout the migration process.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC17387>

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4. The livelihoods of commercial sex workers in Binga

Author(s): O'Donnell, M., M. Khozombah, et al

Produced by: Save the Children, 2002

This report, from Save the Children (SC), explores the links between commercial sex work and food security in a fishing community in northern Zimbabwe. The authors found that one of the coping strategies for women during difficult periods would be to engage in commercial sex work (CSW). The authors argue that sex work needs to be viewed from a livelihoods perspective if the underlying factors are to be addressed. Existing SC programming focuses more on the provision of information, education and condoms in order to reduce the risk of HIV transmission through commercial sex, rather than on livelihoods-related aspects.

The authors suggest two basic ways in which livelihoods programming could influence CSW. In order to prevent women from entering CSW, large-scale interventions such as SC food aid

programmes could potentially have a role in supporting livelihoods and therefore help to reduce the need for women to engage in sex work. For those already engaged in CSW, but seeking a way out, income-generating projects should be considered. The authors also argue that promoting 'safe sex' to those engaged in CSW does not work because women are not in a position to negotiate condom use and, indeed, can make more money by not using condoms. The authors suggest that SC review its delivery channels for condom delivery and use and take these livelihood factors into consideration.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23542>

5. Migration and domestic work in South Africa: worlds of work, health and mobility in Johannesburg

Author(s): Peberdy, S.; Dinat, N.

Produced by: Southern African Mobility Project (SAMP), 2005

This study explores the links between female migrancy, work, health and HIV/AIDS in the lives of domestic workers living in Johannesburg, as well as the implications for domestic workers and health service providers. In addition, the study explores their points of vulnerability to HIV.

Male migrants, and particularly mineworkers and truck drivers, have been the focus of research on the relationship between HIV and migration. At times their partners - usually called "women at risk" - have been included in research. Yet, little attention has been paid to the vulnerability of female migrants themselves to HIV infection and their access to health care and treatment. The study therefore explores this issue using interviews with 1,100 female domestic workers employed in Johannesburg.

The research makes several findings, including the following:

- Not only is migrancy a defining feature of the lives of a majority of the domestic workers, but also, further research is needed to explore whether being single provides an incentive for women to migrate for work.
- The work and living conditions of domestic workers are hard, and this may have implications for those living with HIV/AIDS as these conditions may compromise their health status.
- Contrary to expectations, most of the women surveyed do not have difficulty accessing health services, and a majority of them utilise stated provided allopathic health services.
- Despite their access to health services, the majority of women surveyed do not appear to be protecting themselves from HIV infection. A defining characteristic of this group is the lack of condom use. Over 60% of the sample had never used a condom in their lives, and a majority of those who do use condoms use them irregularly.
- Only a fifth of condom users saying they used condoms all the time when they had sex. Low levels of condom use may also reflect experiences of violence in relationships.
- It appears that this cohort of women workers is either not being reached by health promotion campaigns, or they are just not listening.
- Low levels of condom use may be related to low levels of knowledge around HIV/AIDS issues, including safe sex, and may also be due to their confidence regarding their

vulnerability.

- Low levels of knowledge and condom use are inconsistent with the experiences of these women with the virus. This is because many have been touched by HIV/AIDS in their lives. Over a third knew someone who had died of AIDS; a similar proportion said a member of their family was HIV positive or had died of AIDS; and almost a fifth had physically cared for or supported someone with AIDS.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC21597>

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6. Assessing the vulnerability of women street traders to HIV/AIDS: a comparative analysis of Uganda and South Africa

Authors: Lee, S.

Published by: Health Economics & HIV/AIDS Research Division (HEARD), University of Natal, 2004

This HEARD study examines women street traders' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in South Africa and Uganda. The paper examines how conditions of employment in the informal economy influence women's social and economic marginalisation. It then goes on to explore how this is linked to the social and behavioural dynamics that influence HIV/AIDS. Findings show that most of the women live and work in poor areas, and lack basic health and welfare services and social protection. Moreover, their location of work at traffic intersections, truck stops and transport hubs results in high levels of violence, abuse and rape. These factors all contribute to an increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

The report outlines a number of recommendations, including: secure, allocated trading sites in properly planned and managed markets, where women could trade legally, and micro-finance and community-based micro-health insurance schemes. The report calls for further research in: sexual behaviour and vulnerability, gender-based violence and the changing nature of gender constructions, street-trade as an HIV coping strategy, and decentralised systems of social protection. Finally, the report calls for an environment where local government can implement gender-sensitive HIV prevention programmes as well as local economic development policies. [adapted from author]

Summary available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC16577>

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Other recommended readings

1. Voice and visibility: frontline perspectives on how the global news media reports on HIV/AIDS

Authors: Davies, J; Friedman, S

Published by: Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, 2006

This report from the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+) presents the findings of a survey on the coverage of HIV in the media. The survey was conducted among people living with HIV (PLHIV) and the managers of HIV programmes in 44 countries. It

documents the respondents' perceptions of media coverage of HIV issues and the working relationship between programme managers and journalists, as well as outlining the respondents' views on how the coverage of HIV issues can be improved.

The majority of respondents found international media sources, and particularly the internet, more trustworthy and useful than their local media outlets. They found the coverage of HIV issues in their local media to be infrequent, inaccurate, crisis-driven and sensational. Despite some improvement, the use of discriminatory, stigmatising and fearful language remains a problem in media coverage. A majority of the respondents reported that PLHIV are still stereotypically represented either as passive 'victims' or in discriminatory language which 'blames' them. The programme managers presented a more positive account of their working relationship with the media. PLHIV, reported that journalists usually chose to interview a medical professional rather than a PLHIV. The report recommends the use of more specialist health reporters and more training in HIV awareness for media professionals. It also recommends that the voice of PLHIV be given greater prominence in the coverage of HIV issues, and that resources be devoted to developing media awareness and skills among PLHIV.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23722>

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2.Feminist Africa 6: subaltern sexualities

Published by: Africa Gender Institute, 2006

This issue of Feminist Africa examines the question of sexual rights in Africa. The journal contains a range of articles which challenge the heterosexist and homophobic views of political and church leaders who claim that lesbian, gay and other dissident sexual and gender identities are "unAfrican". The articles examine the historical development of these ideas in the colonial period and also profile individuals and organisations who are working to develop a sexual rights framework in contemporary Africa.

The authors argue that sexual rights are not new sets of rights but the application of the existing set of internationally recognised rights to the domain of sexuality. African feminists have emphasised sexual rights in order to allow dialogue and activism to grow around identities, desires and needs that fall outside of the limited framing of marriage and motherhood. Some activists emphasise the right to freedom from violation which is important in the context of the gendered spread of HIV and the epidemic of sexual violence in Africa. Other activists focus on arguing for rights to pleasure, fulfilment and choices regarding sexual partners. The sexual rights framework challenges cultural ideas which disempower African women and has been opposed by conservative forces in African societies who claim that this is a "foreign" agenda. The authors call for the integration of sexual rights into the wider struggle for human rights and political freedom in Africa.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23723>

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3. Culture, HIV and AIDS: an annotated bibliography

Authors: Nguyen, V; Klot, J; Phillips, A; Pirkle, C
Published by: UNESCO, 2006

This annotated bibliography from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) provides an overview of the theoretical perspectives on the complex

relationship between culture and HIV. It contains information on literature which examines how culture has shaped the pandemic and its impact, along with literature which focuses on the response to the epidemic and places this response in its social and cultural context.

The concept of culture has been used in research on HIV to understand how power operates in the everyday life of individuals. In particular cultural and gender norms disempower women sexually and make them vulnerable to HIV infection. Research has also focused on the connection between sexual violence and HIV, and on how sexuality and identity can operate culturally to either place people at risk or protect them. Cultural norms also shape the epidemic through patterns of sexual relationships and family structure and the bibliography contains specific sections on orphans and vulnerable children and on migration. The literature on the response to the pandemic charts the evolving nature of these responses. This moves from the biomedical, including the development of testing, sexual technologies and anti-retroviral therapy (ART), to responses directed at behavioural change. A more recent development has been a move from an individual focus of behavioural change to responses that operate on a broader systemic level, such as the education and health systems

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23724>

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4. A closer look: the internalization of stigma related to HIV

Authors: Brouard, P; Wills, C

Published by: POLICY project

This report from the USAID-funded POLICY project examines the internalised stigma experienced by people living with HIV (PLHA). It presents findings from the Siyam'kela project in South Africa and the Mo Kexteya project in Mexico. These initiatives were established to study stigma and discrimination experienced by PLHA, and those affected by HIV, and to develop guidelines for mitigating its effect. A key objective was to develop indicators that can be used by programme managers to measure stigma and discrimination and to measure the effectiveness of efforts to mitigate these.

People affected by HIV internalise HIV-related stigma through a complex process involving social, contextual and individual factors. Social factors include gender norms and homophobia and contextual factors include living conditions and whether the person has a supportive family and community. Individual factors include educational status, health status and belief system. Internalised stigma can lead to people with HIV not accessing treatment and other services, or not adhering to treatment regimes if they begin them. It also leads to people with HIV becoming isolated, avoiding emotional and sexual relationships or feeling disempowered and unable to negotiate safe sex. The report recommends that action must be taken on each of the three levels to mitigate the effect of internalised stigma. These actions include working with cultural institutions and health systems, developing support groups for people with HIV, and supporting people with HIV in building their self esteem and becoming positive role models for others.

Available online at: <http://www.eldis.org/cf/rdr/rdr.cfm?doc=DOC23725>

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<http://www.eldis.org/hiv aids/index.htm>

See the complete list of new additions, announcements, job adverts at: www.eldis.org/hiv aids

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