

INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR) was created in July 2001 with generous support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The CSSR comprises four research units and a resource center. These are: the Aids and Society Research Unit (ASRU), the Democracy in Africa Research Unit (DARU), the Social Surveys Unit (SSU), the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) and the Data First Resource Unit (Data First). Our main achievements so far have been: the creation of the Data First Resource Unit; the planning and execution of the first wave of the largest panel survey ever to be run in Africa; and the strengthening of the counselling and research arm of the Memory Box Outreach Programme in Khayelitsha.

The Data First Resource Unit provides access to data, training and other support to researchers. It has proved very popular amongst graduate students and the numbers of students conducting quantitative social science research has increased noticeably. Data First is key to our objective of training the next generation of quantitative social scientists.

The Cape Area Panel Survey (CAPS) went into the field in 2002. Nearly all the interviews have been conducted and we expect to be able to produce preliminary results soon. CAPS has provided a focal point for a range of interdisciplinary and co-operative research projects.

The Memory Box Outreach programme in Khayelitsha provides counselling and support services to HIV positive people. It operates under the auspices of ASRU and has done a great job integrating research and outreach activities. These activities are supported by the Ford Foundation and Pfizer.

Progress has been made in forging co-operative research links with researchers in other universities. The Democracy in Africa Research Unit has links with the University of Natal and the Michigan State University. The Social Surveys Unit has built on the CSSR's close relationship with the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan. We expect these links to bear fruit in 2003 and 2004.



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Welcoming the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) into the CSSR.



When the CSSR was initially set up, SALDRU transferred its library and data archiving facilities to the new Data First Resource Unit, and passed on some of its survey research function to the Social Surveys Unit. Francis Wilson, who had previously headed SALDRU, became the first Director of Data First, and Murray Leibbrandt assumed the leadership of SALDRU.

SALDRU, the Social Surveys Unit and the Data First Resource Unit co-operated during 2002 to produce a 'base-line report' for the Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain survey. In the process, it became clear that CSSR could function as a potential institutional home for SALDRU. This was finalised in September 2002, and SALDRU is now a member of the CSSR. This is an exciting development as it shows that the CSSR has the potential to attract new units and expand the community of scholars working under its auspices. SALDRU brings experience and a much-needed focus on labour and development to the CSSR stable.