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## EXAMPLES OF INNOVATIVE FUNDING

### UNDERSTANDING A CHANGING EPIDEMIC

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#### KING BAUDOIN FOUNDATION

**Qualitative behavioural research on sexuality and HIV/AIDS in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

In 2010, a personal and anonymous survey will be conducted across various provinces and ethnic groups in DRC to examine sexual behaviour and health. This will complement and enrich existing studies aimed at providing more accurate insights (e.g., the 2005 surveillance study of behaviour and HIV surveillance conducted by the Kinshasa School of Public Health).

During the last 20 years, sexual behaviour has changed significantly in DRC. Population movement, improved access to global and regional media, and the opening up of Congolese society to the greater world have revolutionised sexual habits. Whether as a consequence of these changes or its own source of social upheaval, sexual violence against women has increased. Although comprehensive statistics on sexual violence remain difficult to compile, it is clear that cases have surged both numerically and in terms of the ferocity of aggression.

The ongoing civil strife is often put forward as an explanation for these developments. However, the few reliable statistics that exist show that towns that have had neither combat, nor displaced persons, nor any particular activity of uniformed men, nevertheless have extremely high levels of sexual violence perpetrated by civilians. Factors other than war must therefore be relevant and important to understand. Qualitative behavioural research studies can shed light on such factors by analysing how people perceive and live out their sexuality.

Such studies are particularly crucial because the corollary of such violence is, of course, the spread of HIV. The fight against HIV/AIDS in DRC can only be strengthened and made more effective when the roots of problematic behaviour such as sexual violence are understood and addressed.

The aim of this project is to report data on people's intimacy, and set up organisations that provide HIV/AIDS services as well as training on reducing sexual violence and aggression. Involved local actors will integrate the results of this project, which has critical human rights implications, in their multi-media communication programmes, including community radio programmes.



**Understanding sexual behaviour is crucial for developing responses to HIV/AIDS.**