be integrated with some of the positive aspects of the dictatorship such as respect for the private sector, increased efficiency, and competitiveness."

The development of these thoughts in a manifesto called "El consenso económico es posible" (economic consensus is possible), was key to ending the dictatorship and is reflected in the program now being implemented by the current government. It was published under the signature of Cieplan's most senior members in September 1988, a month before the plebiscite called by General Pinochet.

The text included a revealing, sincere analysis of the positive and negative achievements of the military regime and called for the building of a new concept, that of consensus. Its introduction puts it this way:

"We the economists who have put our names to this document are linked professionally to Cieplan and affirm that, in our judgement, a consensus for democracy is possible not only in political terms, but also in economic and social terms.

There are only two basic preconditions for this economic and social consensus to crystallize. First, that those who subscribe to it share the view that the authoritarian cycle in Chile has now run its course and that a new political era of full liberty and democracy must now begin. In order to achieve this, a change in the country's leadership is necessary.

The second condition is that those who support this economic and social consensus are willing to be generous in accepting the advances and contributions made to the development of the country and its economy, both past and present, by the various groups which make up the country. A new era marked by the will to achieve consensus cannot begin if we deny the possibility of synthesizing the experiences and lessons that we as Chileans have learned from the history of the conflicts that have left their mark on recent decades."

Richard Vera in Chile

The scientific discoveries and innovations that are rocking the world today are often unheard of in Nepal, the Himalayan kingdom in South Asia known more for its snow-covered mountains, raging rivers, and wild beauty. Isolation has had a profound effect on the population of this land-locked country — more than 60% of the population live below the poverty-line and 65% are illiterate.

Far from being unconnected, these two statistics are the basis of an IDRC-funded study by the Royal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST), called "Science Popularization." Researchers with the project realized that science and technology, if properly utilized, can provide answers to many of Nepal’s development problems. The trick was how to disseminate knowledge of scientific developments in a country where rugged terrain separates communities and whose population remains trapped in the world of illiteracy and superstition.

RONAST took on the challenge in 1985 by launching a novel, 26-month pilot project designed to spread the word of science and technology through existing channels of mass communication. The project had fairly modest beginnings.

It started with RONAST inviting Nepalese media practitioners, publishers, and editors to a meeting to get their views on how best to disseminate information about science. The participants from the media recommended in one voice that the project should make available information packages on science and technology as they "were not in the position to write science features themselves nor could they hire the services of specialized journalists," says Golul Prasad Pokhrel, a seasoned journalist who headed the Science Popularization project.

The need thus emerged for well-focused and simplified information packages on contemporary science and technology issues that were both relevant to the Nepalese people and available to mass media outlets. In 1986, RONAST Science
Features — a bi-monthly publication — was created to bridge this information gap. Free of cost, it was made available to more than 100 major newspapers published in different cities of Nepal, and the evidence is that the newspapers use it. "Had it not been for the Science Popularization project readers would not have found any science information in our weekly paper," says Jaya Prasad Dahal, editor and publisher of the Gaurab and Nepal Khabar weekly published in Biratnagar. Mukunda Paraajuli, the editor of a new weekly called Janamancha says "the credit for more science information in our newspaper definitely goes to the Science Popularization project." Even in the remote far western region of the country, the editor of Janmat weekly wrote a special editorial highlighting the role played by the project and the science features service.

"It is comforting to note that more and more newspapers are providing space to science information made available by us or produced on their own," says Mr. Pokhrel. Indeed, the science features service of RONAST has become a model for many newspapers and they have started publishing special columns and articles following the pattern of our features, he adds.

There is mounting evidence that this increased availability of science information has had an impact on the general public. "A story in the newspapers on the role of eyebanks in corneal transplants brought a wave of eye tissue donations from the general public," says Banbarilal Mittal, a secretary with the Nepal Eye Foundation.

Researchers with the project quickly realized that, despite the success of the newspaper science features, there were people in remote areas who had little or no access to printed material. Radio was used to overcome this hurdle and a 15-minute weekly Science and Technology Radio Program, aired on Radio Nepal, was created as the second component of the project. Studies have shown that 55-65% of the population of Nepal has access to radio.

The program, delivered in a magazine-type format, was comprised of general knowledge on science, the latest news from science labs around the world, interviews with various scientists, features on scientific institutions, and a radio quiz question-and-answer portion. The radio quiz program, broadcast on the last Saturday of each month, quickly became a favourite of listeners. More than 400 letters from 75 out of the 76 districts in Nepal were sent into researchers and broadcasters working on the radio program. Letters were even received from some neighbouring states of India.

An evaluation of the radio program by a consulting firm found that out of 14 similar programs being aired by Radio Nepal, the science feature was the third most popular.

For Shanta Bahadur Gurung, a key figure in the evaluation of the pilot project, the success of RONAST's newspaper science features service and its radio program are all signs that the project is heading in the right direction. "The overall evaluation of the project shows encouraging signs that much of the information provided by RONAST is trickling down to the target group," he says. Mr. Gurung was the coordinator of the team from the Centre of Education and Development Administration (CEDA) that did a formal evaluation of the Science Popularization project.

Despite the popularity of these activities, there are still obstacles to overcome and room for improvement, Mr. Gurung adds.

One strong limiting factor to the growth of science information in Nepal is the lack of infrastructure in place to train science journalists. Developing the skills of science writers and broadcasters has become an important aspect of the project's activity. For the first time in Nepal two specialized training workshops on science reporting were organized for journalists in the project's first phase. In all, 40 science writers and broadcasters attended and benefited from the workshops.

Another obstacle facing the project is the lack of interest in science-related issues among young journalists; many find the subject cut-and-dry compared to political reporting. "The country is in dire need of trained science journalists," says Jyoti Vaidya of the Matrabhojini weekly who himself participated in the science writing workshop in 1986. "We want to start a regular science column and are looking actively for science journalists but there are none." Other editors of newspapers across the country express similar opinions.

The obstacles facing researchers with the Science Popularization project are formidable but they say at least the groundwork for a greater understanding of important scientific information has been laid. "With our news feature service and the continued success of our radio program, the situation for science popularization is a lot brighter now than it was in the early 1980s," says Mr. Pokhrel.

Prakash Khanal in Nepal