Annual Corporate Evaluation Report 2009

For Presentation to the Board of Governors
June 2009

Evaluation Unit
International Development Research Centre

Acknowledgements

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1 Introduction

The Annual Corporate Evaluation (ACE) Report is presented to the Board of Governors each year in June. The report presents highlights of evaluation across the Centre for the past year and documents both evaluations completed and evaluation plans for the Centre.

This year's ACE Report focuses on work that illustrates the approach to evaluation that supports the vision (see box "Vision") and underpins our reputation for excellence. Looking more closely at our evaluative process, we find that it is rooted in three key factors. It is:

1. Decentralized: IDRC builds evaluative capacity and expertise into all levels of the organization to support accountability and learning in projects, programs, and the wider development community.
2. Use-oriented: IDRC delivers quality use-oriented findings. This means that the issues assessed and the approaches used vary according to the purpose and intent of the evaluation. This ensures that the results can be used to improve processes and outcomes.
3. Balanced: IDRC invests in research and dialogue to promote innovative and relevant methods of evaluation. The goal is to balance the need to measure results with the need to understand the processes, people, and contexts that contribute to improved development.

Vision

The Evaluation Unit's work is guided by its vision, articulated in *Evaluation Strategy 2005–2010*, which is to support "useful evaluation that promotes innovation and social change." At a practical level, this means supporting both the Centre and its partners, as well as promoting methodology development and processes of evaluative thinking that balance opportunities for learning with the need for accountability. Outcome challenges set out in this strategy include supporting:

- *IDRC partners* to promote and use utilization focused approaches to evaluation;
- *IDRC program staff* to integrate evaluation and evaluative thinking into their programming decisions; and
- *IDRC management* to foster a culture of evaluative thinking across the Centre.

The report is organized around these three factors. The examples demonstrate how IDRC's approach to evaluation enhances the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of research projects, programs, and corporate processes. They also highlight areas for improvement.

Section 2 considers the decentralized nature of evaluation at the Centre and documents results at the project, program, and community levels. While many programs actively foster evaluation, the Global Health Research Initiative (GHRI) is the first program to create a senior position for a monitoring and evaluation specialist and presents a new approach to managing evaluation at the Centre. This position works closely with the Evaluation Unit and responds to the comparatively high level of demand for monitoring and evaluation in a jointly-funded program. In the Rural Poverty and Environment (RPE) program initiative, several community-based natural resource management projects have collaborated to build stronger monitoring and evaluation activities into their projects

and programs. As a result, they have generated new approaches to research and capacity development and are broadening their focus to include organizational capacity development in their work. The Centre has also supported a non-governmental organization in India in modifying organization development and evaluation tools to make them more relevant to other grassroots rural non-governmental organizations in the region.

As these examples show, IDRC's decentralized approach allows evaluations to be tailored to the unique needs of each user group. Embedding evaluation expertise and activities into the multiple levels at which the Centre supports research for development ensures that results are relevant and can be used for both accountability and learning.

Section 3 focuses on the use of evaluation and illustrates how use-oriented findings improve processes, practices, implementation, and knowledge sharing at all levels. An evaluation of the African Highlands Initiative has helped that program address the challenge of going to scale from a successful local-level participatory natural resource management project to a project with national reach. A research network is using its evaluation to improve network governance and sustainability and to support other networking initiatives. Based on an evaluation of its capacity in social and gender analysis, a program initiative at the Centre has developed a staff training program to improve the integration of gender and social equity issues into program-supported research projects. At the corporate level, external reviews, strategic evaluations, and a Centre-wide review of the competitive grants program all generated findings that have been used to improve the design and outcomes of corporate initiatives. At each level, the users of the evaluation were actively involved in key phases of the activity—from the design, to the analysis of the findings, to determining next steps. While this involvement is no guarantee of success, it dramatically improves the possibilities for effective use and will continue to be an important component of all IDRC evaluations.

Section 4 focuses on how the Evaluation Unit promotes evaluation processes that contribute to better development research. The balance between learning and accountability is a key factor in all evaluations and has been a hallmark of IDRC's evaluation approach since the Unit was created in 1992. In this report, we present our current work, which focuses on efforts to broaden the concept of impact evaluation to make it more relevant to a wider swath of development research. This is a collaborative undertaking that includes development economists, research evaluators, development evaluators, and practitioners, from the public, private, and academic sectors. This work seeks to integrate the best of traditional impact evaluation with the needs of development evaluation. The purpose is to present a more comprehensive view that considers not only whether a change occurred, but also how and in what contexts it was successful. This is a promising evolution in impact evaluation and one that will increase the options for effective evaluation.

Section 5 of the report presents evaluation "at a glance"— the Evaluation Unit's annual review of evaluation quality, evaluator profiles, and evaluation expenditures. Overall, the quality of evaluation at the Centre has remained high. This year no evaluations were rejected as being inadequate. The Centre continues to strive for a balance of evaluators from Canada and from the global South. The trend toward fewer Southern evaluators over the past several years is a concern. While it reflects the limited pool of evaluators in the global South, it highlights the importance of increasing our focus on building capacity for development research evaluation and provides direction for future programming.

1.1 Going Forward

As we move into our final year of the Centre's 2005 five-year strategic plan, the Evaluation Unit is involved in a number of initiatives and evaluations that span a wide range of functions. In addition to supporting program- and project-level evaluations (see Annex 2) and expanding our focus on building evaluation capacity in the global South, we expect to report on two strategic evaluations: participation in large conferences and program devolution. The large conferences evaluation will give the Centre insights into the value and costs of participation in major events as a strategy for disseminating and communicating our work. The evaluation of program devolution will look at the role of IDRC as an incubator for independent development research organizations.

This year, in addition to program reviews in the Information and Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D), Research for Health Equity (RHE), and Innovation, Policy and Science (IPS) program areas, the Centre will be launching an external review of evaluation at the Centre in preparation for the development of a new evaluation strategy. The Evaluation Unit is also involved in the development of the Centre's new corporate Strategic Plan, with a focus on improving its evaluability.

Evaluation Publications

Knowledge to Policy by Fred Carden examines the consequences of 23 research projects funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre. Key findings and case studies from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are presented in a reader-friendly, journalistic style, giving the reader a deeper grasp and understanding of approaches, contexts, relationships, and events.
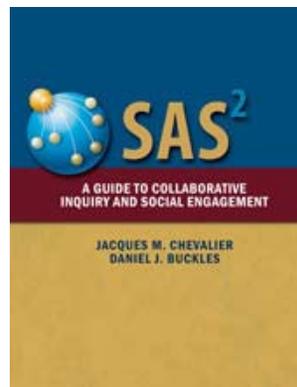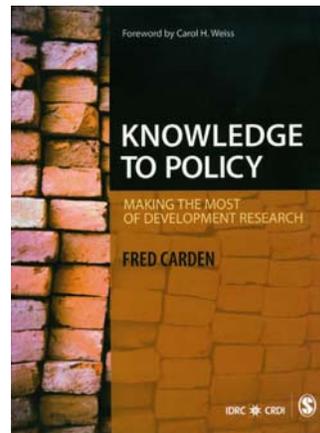
SAS²: A Guide to Collaborative Inquiry and Social Engagement, by Jacques M. Chevalier and Daniel J. Buckles represents a significant international effort to support the creation and mobilization of practical, authentic knowledge for social change.

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2 Promoting Collective Ownership Through a Decentralized Evaluation System

Evaluation has an essential role to play in supporting research for development. With a focus on utility, evaluation at IDRC is decentralized. As such it is a key component of project, program, and corporate management processes right from the planning stage through to completion. This allows evaluation activities to be tailored to the specific needs of the people, organizations, and communities that will use the results.

In some cases projects are the focus of evaluation; in other situations, programs, organizations, or key issues provide a focal point. This decentralized model helps to create a culture of evaluative thinking across the Centre. It strengthens community capacity, fosters innovation, improves accountability and collaboration, and promotes evidence-based decision making at all levels. The Evaluation Unit plays an important role within this decentralized system. It provides oversight of the system, manages external reviews, conducts strategic evaluations on issues that cut across Centre programming, and contributes to innovation and debate in the field of development and evaluation. The Evaluation Unit also provides technical support to corporate, program-, and project-level evaluation activities.

With the support of the Evaluation Unit, programs are responsible for their own program-level evaluations. This means that evaluations are designed and implemented by those who are in the best position to make use of the results. Their engagement in all stages of the evaluation process significantly enhances the potential for use of the results. The following examples illustrate how the decentralized evaluation system at IDRC allows evaluation to match the unique needs of evaluation users at the program and project levels, as well as within the wider development community.

2.1 Building Evaluation Into Projects Generates New Approaches to Capacity Development

At the project level, evaluation activities can be tailored to assess specific project goals and provide direction for building capacity. In Asia, the **Rural Poverty and Environment** (RPE) program initiative has supported a number of capacity development efforts in the field of community-based natural resource management.[1] According to Ronnie Vernooy, the officer responsible for this project, "the most effective capacity development strategies are those that are learner driven, dynamic and flexible, and embrace monitoring and evaluation from the start."

Through informal networking, nine organizations from China, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Vietnam joined forces with resource persons from IDRC to develop and test methods for evaluating processes for, and outcomes of, capacity development. Teams used a range of approaches, including targeted training, field research, periodic peer review, regular mentoring, resource materials, and collaborative writing of reports and case studies.

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[1] Project 103643, "Using Evaluation for Community-Based Natural Resource Management Capacity Development."

By looking closely at the use and outcomes of monitoring and evaluation in capacity development projects, the informal network found that:

- the effectiveness and meaningfulness of learning efforts are increased if monitoring and evaluation is integral to the process from start to finish and embraced by all involved;
- monitoring and evaluation is easier if capacities to be developed are precisely defined;
- regular monitoring and evaluation contributes to better outcomes and improves the quality of the learning process itself;
- there is no one single way to integrate monitoring and evaluation; and
- context matters.

The results of the evaluation activities generated new approaches to ongoing research and capacity development efforts. For example, the Mongolian team found new options to add value to local products; the Chinese teams adjusted community-based natural resource management course contents; and one of the Philippine teams began to pay more attention to communicating with policy makers. Teams also realized that there was no direct link between organizational and individual capacity development; some teams are now addressing organizational capacity development more directly.

2.2 Building Evaluation Into Programs Improves Accountability and Collaboration

Building evaluative capacity at the program level contributes to learning, accountability, and collaboration. **The Global Health Research Initiative** (GHRI)—a partnership between Health Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the International Development Research Centre, and the Canadian International Development Agency designed to strengthen Canada's role on the global health research scene—recently created a new position for an evaluation specialist. This position works closely with the Evaluation Unit and responds to the comparatively high level of demand for monitoring and evaluation in a jointly funded program. According to Linda Murphy, Special Advisor to GHRI, "Evaluation allows us to be confident that we are offering the best value in services. With the creation of this position we can continue to re-shape and re-direct programs in the interest of accountability."

To strengthen the evaluation function in GHRI and in partner programs, the Evaluation Specialist will:

- guide the development and implementation of an evaluation strategy for GHRI, building on evaluation activities and resources within GHRI and its funded and funding partners;
- mentor other members of the GHRI team to rapidly increase the team's capabilities in monitoring and evaluation; and
- ensure cross-learning among partner organizations and within IDRC.

Linda Murphy sees this as "an exercise in role modeling as GHRI promotes evidence-informed health and research systems. This strong investment in evaluation and learning activities increases GHRI's ability to contribute to the knowledge base for research programming— for its own programs and the broader funding community." This position

has increased the visibility of GHRI's evaluation activities and it is generating new opportunities for collaboration with other programs and agencies.

2.3 Building Evaluation Into the Wider Development Community Strengthens Grassroots Organizations

Building strong cultures of monitoring and evaluation in grassroots organizations is critical to both the demand and supply side of rural development activities. On the demand side, grassroots organizations build community capabilities, knowledge, and demand for relevant and effective services. On the supply side, they help implement government programs.

Chaitanya, a development organization established in 1993, has played an important role in spreading the community self-help group movement in and around Maharashtra, India. Chaitanya works in communities throughout the region, in four core sectors: water and sanitation; reproductive and child health; livelihood security; and legal literacy. Since April 2006, Chaitanya has been implementing an IDRC-supported project[2] to provide capacity-building support in the areas of planning, monitoring, evaluation, and resource mobilization.

Using an action research approach, Chaitanya modified organizational development and evaluation tools to make them more relevant for small rural development organizations. For example, one partner noted that that program, "…tells us to formulate our own systems as we think appropriate, but then follow them with rigour and precision. In fact it is helping our organization achieve International Organization for Standardization status." Other influential actors have recognized the strength of this approach and are asking Chaitanya to expand their work. A number of Indian donors are interested in supporting Chaitanya to conduct work in the Vidharba region that builds directly on the project. They think that the high prevalence of farmer suicide in Vidharba may be related to weak development organizations (which form a key part of the rural extension system) and the absence of adequate social support infrastructure. Chaitanya expects to build on the 10 original organizations by adding 50 new organizations in 2009 and covering all 33 districts in Maharashtra by 2010.

Yashada (a state training organization) supported two workshops with over 100 non-governmental organizations to bring learnings from the project to other groups. It now wants Chaitanya to train all district chief executive officers of the Department of Rural Development housed in each Zila Parishad (district government). The training will reinforce the importance of building strong non-governmental organizations with transparent systems of performance, evaluation, and planning. Strengthened organizations will be better positioned to support the successful implementation of key government programs, such as those under the *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act*.

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[2] This project is co-funded by the Evaluation Unit and Partnership and Business Development Division (PBDD) as one component of the project "Capacity Building in Resource Mobilization for IDRC Research Partners" (102564).

3 Use-Oriented Evaluation

At IDRC, evaluations are use- and user-oriented. This ensures that the focus on utility and accountability permeates all of the Centre's work right from the grassroots through to the corporate level. Two of the most critical questions involved in planning and evaluation are "What are the intended uses of the evaluation?" and "Who are the intended users?" The quality of most other aspects of the evaluation—such as the methods and the types of evidence generated—will hinge on how well these key questions are addressed in the initial planning. By bringing together the primary intended users to identify and clarify the use(s) of the evaluation, the complex task of evaluation planning is more focused and explicit, and the evaluation process itself more effective. IDRC staff and management can call on the Evaluation Unit for support at any stage of a project.

The following examples highlight how this approach has generated practical results for a range of IDRC-supported research projects and initiatives.

3.1 Using Project-Level Findings to Increase Uptake

At the project level, findings can help improve project implementation and increase uptake in the wider community.

The African Highlands Initiative began in 1995 as a consortium of national and international agricultural research and development organizations in eastern Africa to address the serious degradation of the natural resource base in the intensively cultivated and overpopulated highlands of Eastern and Central Africa. Over 15 years, the African Highlands Initiative has

A women's group attending a meeting of the African Highlands Initiative.

developed novel methods and approaches for participatory natural resource management through testing in pilot sites, cross-site synthesis, and regional dissemination and institutionalization. With financial support from IDRC, the African Highlands Initiative and its host organizations conducted an evaluation of the Initiative's progress and impact in the region. This evaluation found that the Initiative:

- had a measurable impact on the livelihoods of participating farmers and, in some cases, of other farmers in pilot sites;
- had several positive outcomes for communities, policies, and partner institutions;
- supported local farmers and institutions in adopting new natural resource management approaches and in seeing the positive impact that research could have on their lives;
- was successful in building stakeholder capacity in different areas: farmers became better at recognizing and solving natural resource management issues and communities began to use a participatory process to solve conflicts; and

- would benefit, in subsequent phases, from building on partnerships to facilitate the up/out-scaling of its methods.

The African Highlands Initiative used these findings to design the next phase of the project,[3] which will focus on accelerating the broader uptake of natural resource management innovations and on implementing a devolution strategy that empowers national stakeholders to lead natural resource management research and development.

3.2 Using Program-Level Findings to Strengthen Practices and Competencies

At the program level, user-oriented evaluations focus on enhancing specific aspects of a program. Depending on the program area, the context, the focus, and the partners involved, an evaluation can lead to greater understanding of strengths and weaknesses (in process, in capacity, or in knowledge) and can provide direction for moving forward.

IDRC's **Pan Asia Networking** (PAN) program initiative builds research capacity in information and communication technologies (ICTs). To build that capacity it supports multi-country networks of scientists and practitioners in Asia. A recent evaluation looked at giving the PAN team and four network leaders[4] a better understanding of PAN's networking approach and its outcomes.

With the support of two external evaluators, the four team members and the four network leaders determined the nature, scope, and questions in the evaluation. They focused on areas that would help them build on their ability to develop, manage, and support networks in the coming years.

Pan Asia Networking (PAN) supports research on how information and communication technologies can contribute to community development in Asia through local capacity building and knowledge sharing.
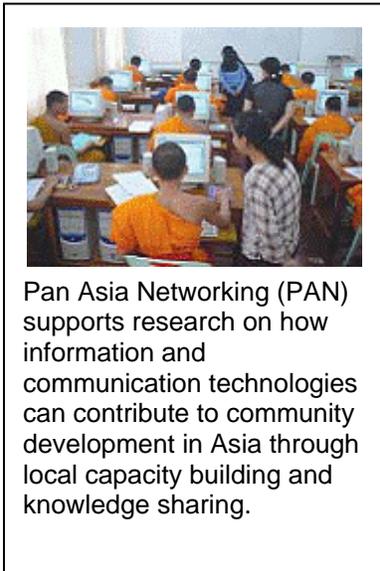
The evaluation of PAN Networks found that:
- participants in each research network are satisfied that they have the leadership needed to encourage participation and manage the network projects, communications, knowledge and learning;
- the networks are healthy and resilient (with the seasoned networks more so than the start-ups);
- the networks mobilize appropriate expertise and are able to adapt to changing circumstances; and
- the networks could be strengthened by further improvements in communication, participation and, in some cases, resource mobilization.

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[3] "Going to Scale: Sustainable Land Management in the Highlands of Eastern Africa" (105495).
[4] The four networks are: PAN Localization, PAN Distance and Open Resource Access (PANdora), PAN Asian Collaboration for Evidence-based e-Health Adoption and Application (PANACeA), and the Open Net Initiative (ONI-Asia).

PAN team members and network leaders are already using the evaluation findings to:

- learn from and assess existing networks (using the frameworks and metrics provided by the evaluation);
- improve current practices to increase the sustainability of networks by, for example, providing additional time and space for project-specific evaluative activities, electing regional coordinators, and changing the mid-year monitoring emphasis to include peer networking;
- model future networks—particularly in thinking through the purpose, governance, and vitality of a network using the common purpose and list of principles developed by network leaders and the PAN team; and
- share findings with the other network initiatives at the PAN-All Partners Conference in Penang, Malaysia in June 2009.

The Governance, Equity and Health (GEH) program initiative examines health systems through a governance lens and, conversely, uses health as an entry point to approach challenges of governance—how power is exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens have their say. Health inequalities are a core concern for GEH. Integrating gender considerations into research is a crosscutting issue, which falls under the broad area of social equity.

In 2005, the GEH team unanimously agreed that a gender evaluation would help improve their capacity for gender analysis and integration into GEH's research projects. Evaluation consultants assessed social and gender analysis capacity within GEH. The consultants subsequently analyzed how social and gender analysis was used in select GEH-supported research projects.

Evaluators found that the GEH program treated gender and social equity issues separately; that its use of gender terminology lacked analysis and understanding; and that it received limited guidance on, and resources for, integrating gender into the program prospectus.

Evaluators noted that there are many obstacles to integrating gender analysis into already weak health systems, and they identified a need for GEH to:

- improve its methodology for bridging social and gender analysis;
- improve its capacity for gender analysis;
- develop guidance tools for gender integration into health systems and financing projects; and
- promote partner buy-in and capacity for gender health research.

Based on this assessment, evaluation consultants designed a gender training workshop for the team to provide GEH staff with feedback and to build their capacity to integrate social and gender equity issues in health systems research.

3.3 Using Crosscutting Findings to Improve Corporate Processes and Accountability

The Evaluation Unit not only supports evaluative thinking and ability at the project and program levels, but also examines practices and outcomes across programs through external, strategic, and focused reviews. These higher-level evaluation activities paint a

broader picture of what is being accomplished and provide insight and direction for learning and accountability processes throughout the Centre.

Competitive Grants

Competitions have been a useful way of moving development research in new directions and identifying new researchers, recipients, and partners for IDRC. Over the last few years, every IDRC program has allocated some of its funding through competitive grants processes. In 2006, five programs commissioned evaluations of their competitive grant projects. Using these evaluations, the Evaluation Unit commissioned a review that looked for underlying themes and good practices. The review asked: "What worked, for whom, and in what context?" This review was presented to program leaders who thought it would be useful to turn the findings into guidance for Centre staff.

The review found that:
- Setting up a competitive grants project is as time- and labour-intensive as developing a project individually with a partner organization. However, the tasks and focus are different.
- When aiming for capacity building, networking, and policy influence outcomes, projects funded via competitive processes require different considerations than regular projects. For example, researchers may hesitate to pave the way toward influencing policy by including key policy makers and affected communities in developing a proposal for a competition when they are not confident that the proposal will be funded.

The evaluation unit designed a web-based document that allows staff to quickly access evaluation findings that will help them consider ways to effectively design, manage, and evaluate projects that include competitive grants. This document is now available on the IDRC website here.

Capacity Building

Between 2005 and 2009, the Evaluation Unit conducted a strategic evaluation to investigate the Centre's contributions to capacity development in the organizations with which it works. The evaluation provided IDRC staff and managers with a framework and a common language to discuss, examine, and assess the Centre's approach to and success in capacity development. In October of 2009, 65 staff from the Ottawa and regional offices attended a large Sharing of Findings meeting that was organised to roll-out and discuss the findings.[5]

The day-and-a-half event stimulated debate around different Centre understandings of the practice of capacity development, pushing staff to question their own perceptions and focusing on ways in which IDRC can better track and report on aggregate capacity development results. Studies and frameworks from the capacity development strategic evaluation have been used both inside and outside of IDRC in a variety of ways:
- External evaluators have used findings to develop frameworks for assessing program initiative outcomes as part of the external review process.
- Regional offices and program areas have used the organisational case studies as tools for learning in Annual Learning Forum events.

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[5] For more information, see document from the meeting available on the IDRC website.

- IDRC partners—the Peru Consortium for Economic and Social Research (CIES) and Makerere University—have used organisational case studies to assist with strategic planning processes.

External Reviews

On behalf of IDRC management, the Evaluation Unit conducts an external review of each program just past the mid-point of the prospectus cycle (approximately every five years). The primary users of the external reviews are Centre management and the Board of Governors, although programs are also expected to consider how to incorporate the findings in their next prospectus. In March 2009, external reviews of four Environment and Natural Resource Management programs (Urban Poverty and the Environment, Rural Poverty and the Environment, Ecohealth, and the Economy and Environment Program for South East Asia) were presented to the Board of Governors.[6]

These reviews generated productive discussions at both the board and program levels, and have already led to changes in outcome tracking processes. As a result of the external review recommendations:
- the Ecohealth program has invited four projects to work with monitoring and evaluation experts to help them articulate their theories of change and improve tracking of outcomes of Ecohealth research; and
- the Rural Poverty and the Environment team is developing tools and approaches to better assess project outcomes in relation to program objectives linking poverty alleviation with natural resource management.

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[6] In addition to these four external reviews, governors received a mid-term evaluation of the Centre's collaborative program with the Department for International Development (DFID) in the U.K. in adaptation to climate change in Africa (CCAA).

4 Learning and Accountability: Maintaining the Balance

IDRC believes that evaluation should balance the opportunity to learn with the need for accountability. To achieve this balance the Evaluation Unit develops and uses a range of tools and approaches. There is no one-size-fits-all evaluation tool or process that will meet the development needs of all communities or projects, and so the Evaluation Unit invests in research and dialogue that focus not only on results, but also on the processes, people, and contexts that contribute to improved development.

In the past, IDRC focused on methodologies—such as Outcome Mapping—that looked at behavioural change, organizational development, and participation. Outcome Mapping shifts the focus of attention from the ultimate impacts—where most research has little direct contribution—to the level of outcomes as measured by changes in behaviour and action by researchers and those with whom they work. These groups lead change that ultimately results in impact. While this approach continues to resonate with many researchers and organizations that focus on social change, over the past several years, there has been a strong call for broader use of experimental methods in impact evaluation.

A recent shift in the development community toward the pre-eminent use of the experimental method in impact evaluation could undermine efforts to provide comprehensive evaluations that consider not only *whether* a change has occurred, but also *how* and in *what contexts* it was successful. In response to this shift, IDRC's research is focusing on the appropriate use of impact evaluation.

4.1 The Impact of Impact Evaluations

Impact evaluation has emerged as a major thread in development research and evaluation in recent years. However, definitions and usage of impact evaluations vary widely across sectors and research organizations. Narrow definitions focus on using strict and controlled experimental and quasi-experimental studies to attribute change to a particular intervention. The belief is that collecting impact evaluation information on "what works" will make it possible to target support only to those programs that can clearly demonstrate their effectiveness on a narrow and clearly defined range of outcomes. This approach poses multiple challenges for organizations and researchers working in the field of development, where multiple interventions are being used to create change; where context and interdependencies play a critical role in determining outcomes; and where desired outcomes are defined by a broad range of behaviours and interactions. There is a growing recognition of the need to expand the definition of impact evaluation to reflect these realities. A broader definition of impact evaluation would define it as those studies that assess the extent to which interventions make a

significant difference identified through comparisons — across a range of possible outcomes and take into account how changes in context have an effect on up-scaling.

The Centre's view has emphasized the importance of methodological pluralism, with a focus on first identifying what needs to be assessed, before determining how that assessment should be carried out. The Evaluation Unit is collaborating with a group of evaluation scholars and practitioners concerned with the effects of using the narrow definition of impact evaluation on the development sector. When done well and used appropriately impact evaluation can be informative, but when done badly or inappropriately impact evaluation can: waste scarce resources, reinforce inequalities, promote wider adoption of unsuitable practices, and undermine good practices. Launched in March 2009 at the *Perspectives on Impact Evaluation Conference* in Cairo,[7] this group's call to action is promoting changes in the way impact evaluations are designed, implemented, and commissioned. The development community is being asked to:

Rethink impact evaluation by ensuring that it:
- can and does contribute to improved development; and
- is suited to the specific nature and context of each development.

Reshape impact evaluation by ensuring that it:
- is embedded within robust systems of monitoring, assessment, and learning;
- produces a comprehensive picture;
- explains how and why impacts occur; and
- draws from methodological developments in the natural and social sciences.

Reform impact evaluation by ensuring that those who commission evaluations:
- address the current asymmetries and inequities of North-South evaluation;
- strengthen the evaluation architecture and standards among networks and key players;
- resource impact evaluation as one of many elements in a robust system for monitoring and evaluation; and
- adopt a wide range of reporting techniques for a broader set of impact evaluation users.

IDRC's decentralized, balanced, and user-oriented approach to evaluation aligns well with the practices and goals described in the call to action. The Centre continues to learn from its experience and to improve on processes and capacity. The Evaluation Unit will continue to share the Centre's knowledge and expertise with the wider evaluation and development community. The paper *Impact Evaluation for Improving Development* (IE4ID) is attached as Annex 4. This approach will be further developed over the next two years.

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[7] This conference was hosted by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, the Network of Networks for Impact Evaluation, and African Evaluation Association. For more information, see http://www.impactevaluation2009.org.

5 Evaluation at a Glance

A decentralized evaluation system at IDRC means that evaluators are not only contracted by the Evaluation Unit but also by management, programs, regional offices, and project partners. The Evaluation Unit tracks the profile of evaluators by geographic location and gender. This year, the Evaluation Unit received 36 evaluation reports: 23 were project- and program-level evaluations; 13 were external reviews or strategic evaluations managed or led by the Evaluation Unit.

In total, 67 evaluators were hired to conduct the reports received this year. For the second year in a row, the Centre hired a greater percentage of Northern evaluators: 75 percent of evaluators were from the North, 23 percent from the South, and 2 percent were unspecified. (See Chart 1.) While the Centre prefers to hire the best evaluator for a particular evaluation, in keeping with the Centre's broader objectives to build capacity in the global South, the Evaluation Unit continues to encourage the hiring of Southern evaluators wherever possible. The absolute number of Southern evaluators has not declined, but the large increase in evaluations carried out this year resulted in a higher proportion of Northern evaluators. This imbalance reinforces the importance we attach to increasing evaluation capacity in the South.

Chart 1: Profile of Evaluators by Region

The Evaluation Unit will continue to monitor this distribution in coming years to see if the increase in the proportion of Northern evaluators reflects a growing trend.

The profile of evaluators further shows that 58 percent of the evaluators were male, 40 percent were female, and 2 percent were unspecified.[8] Chart 2 indicates no significant change in the ratio over the past four years.

Chart 2: Profile of Evaluators by Gender
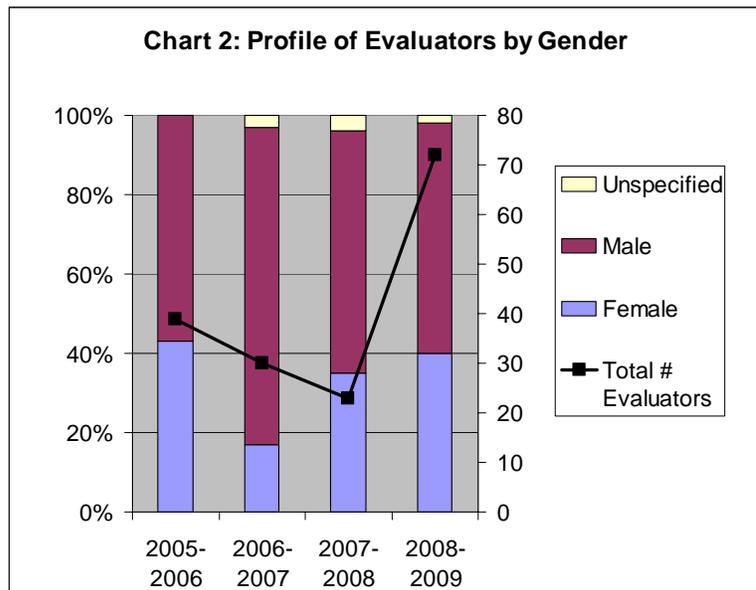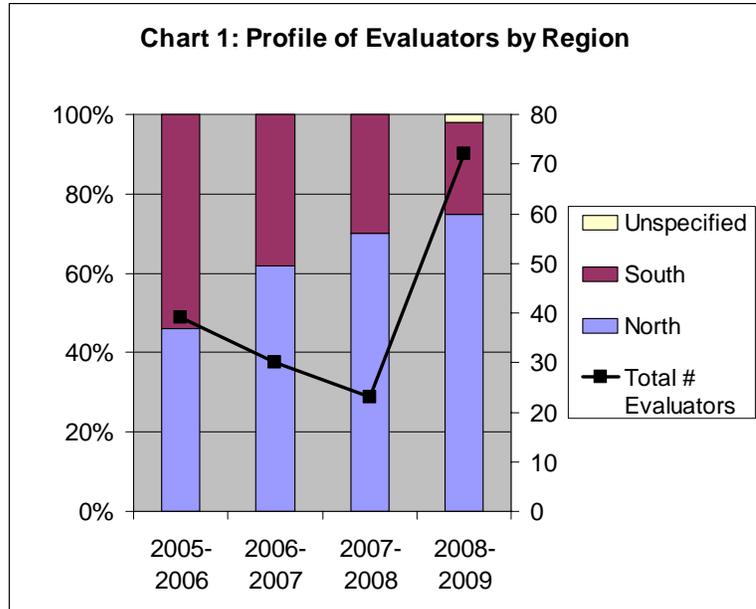
[8] Organizational authorship

In 2008–2009, the Centre received 23 project- and program-level evaluation reports. The Evaluation Unit assesses the **quality** of project/program evaluation reports against criteria based on the program standards endorsed by international evaluation associations:

- **Utility** measures the extent to which the evaluations explicitly identify the users and uses of the evaluations and describe how the users participate in the evaluation process.
- **Accuracy** measures the extent to which the evaluation reports present conclusions and recommendations that are supported by evidence that has been derived through the application of appropriate and solid methods.
- **Feasibility** measures the extent to which the methods and approaches are matched to the questions and issues the evaluation set out to examine.
- **Propriety** measures adherence to ethical standards.[9]

Chart 3: Quality of Evaluation Reports
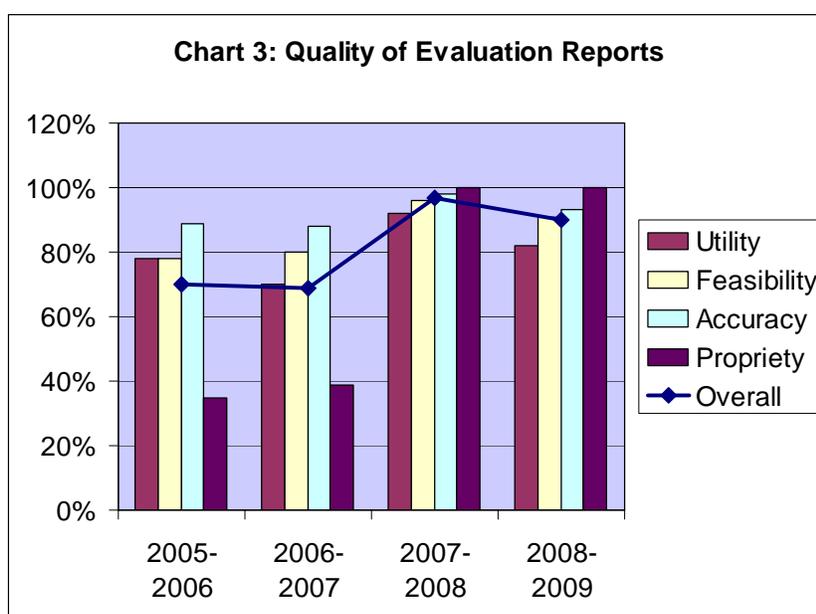
Chart 3 presents the average quality ratings for all project- and program-level reports for each of the criteria. This year's evaluation reports received slightly lower scores than in 2007–2008, with the largest drop on measures of utility (from 92 percent in 2007–2008 to 82 percent in 2008–2009). However, there have been significant improvements in the quality of evaluation reports from the 2005–2006 reporting period. All of this year's reports showed high quality across all four dimensions, with an overall score of 90 percent. All 23 reports were deemed of acceptable quality according to international standards.

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[9] Until 2007/2008, propriety was assessed in relation to both ethical issues as well as explicit goals to increase the capacity of the evaluation users. Now, the propriety standard only assesses ethical issues.

Program budgets are intended to identify Centre-wide **expenditures** on evaluation activities. This year the Evaluation Unit worked with Centre databases to determine overall expenditures on evaluation as a proportion of program spending. A review of the integrity of that data however, indicates significant gaps in reporting. In order to present accurate data about expenditures on evaluation, work needs to be done to improve reporting on evaluation expenditures. The Evaluation Unit will work with the Centre to find ways to improve reporting and will provide an update in our next Annual Corporate Evaluation report.

Annex 1: Acronyms

ACE	Annual Corporate Evaluation Report
ATSA	African Tobacco Situational Analyses
CBRM	Capacity Building in Resource Mobilization
CCAA	Climate Change Adaptation in Africa
CIES	Peru Economic and Social Research Consortium
CIET	Community, Information, Empowerment and Transparency
COPEH-TLAC	Community of Practice Ecohealth-Toxins in Latin America and the Caribbean
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
EEPSEA	Economy and Environment Program for South East Asia
ENRM	Environment and Natural Resource Management program area
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
GEH	Governance, Equity and Health
GGP	Globalization, Growth and Poverty
GHRI	Global Health Research Initiative
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICA/CEA	Institute for Connectivity in the Americas/ Connectivity and Equity in the Americas program initiative
ICRAF	World Agroforestry Centre
ICT4D	Information and Communications Technology for Development program area
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IE4ID	Impact Evaluation for Improving Development
IEPRI	Instituto de Estudios Politicos y Relaciones Internationales, Universidad de Colombia
IPS	Innovation, Policy and Science program area
ITS	Innovation, Technology and Society program initiative
LIRNEAsia	Learning Initiative for Network Economies in Asia
LOG-IN	Local Governance and Information Communications Technology Research Network for Africa
PAN Asia	Pan Asia Networking program initiative
PARSEP	Progamme d'appui aux cadres nationaux de suivi / évaluation des stratégies de réduction de la pauvreté
PBDD	Partnership and Business Development Division
PCD	Peace, Conflict and Development program initiative
RHE	Research for Health Equity program area
RITC	Research on International Tobacco Control
RPE	Rural Poverty and the Environment program initiative
RoKS	Research on Knowledge Systems
SANDEE	South Asian Network for Environmental Economics
SDPI	Sustainable Development Policy Institute
SEP	Social and Economic Policy program area
SID	Special Initiatives Division
STIPRS	Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Reviews

UPE	Urban Poverty and the Environment program initiative
WADIMENA	Water Demand Initiative Middle East and North Africa
WARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office
WRC	Women's Rights and Citizenship program initiative

Annex 2: Evaluation Plan 2009–2010

The following table shows the evaluations that programs are undertaking during 2009–2010. Where available, budget information is included in parenthesis after the title of the evaluation. All figures are indicative.

Program Initiative	New Evaluations	On-Going Evaluations
Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM)		
Rural Poverty and the Environment (RPE)	WADIMENA[10] Project Evaluation ($50,000) Community-Based Natural Resource Management Learning Institute Project Evaluation ($30,000)	Capacity Building for Community Based Natural Resources Management- 9 Asian Case Studies Project Evaluation
Urban Poverty and the Environment (UPE)	N/A	N/A
Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health (Ecohealth)	COPEH-TLAC Project Evaluation ($60,000)	N/A
Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (CCAA)	Internal Evaluation, Conference Support Update Evaluation of Capacity Building Workshop	N/A
Environmental Economics	SANDEE ($8500)	N/A

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[10] Please see Annex 1 for Acronyms contained in this chart.

Program Initiative	New Evaluations	On-Going Evaluations
Social and Economic Policy (SEP)		
Globalization, Growth and Poverty (GGP)	N/A	External Review ($155,000) Presence and quality of political economy and institutional analysis in GGP programming, Thematic Evaluation PARSEP Project Evaluation ($20,000)
Peace, Conflict and Development (PCD)	Land Seizures Project Evaluation ($6,000) Evaluation of Globalization Competition Finalists IEPRI, SDPI Project Evaluation Africa Transitional Justice Research Network (CSVR) ($33,000) Arab Families Working Group	External Review ($155,000) Understanding Impunity Project Evaluation
Women's Rights and Citizenship (WRC)	N/A	External Review ($155,000) University of Witwatersrand Training Institute Project Evaluation
Governance, Equity and Health (GEH)	Benchmarking Progress Against Prospectus Program Evaluation External Review	Gender Strengthening in GEH Program Evaluation ($20,000)

Program Initiative	New Evaluations	On-Going Evaluations
Research on International Tobacco Control (RITC)	CIET Project Evaluation Program Evaluation for DFID ($50,000) Evaluation of RITC Small Grants Competitions ($20,000) Evaluation of IDRC- RITC/ATSA-Gates Process Program Evaluation ($30,000) External Review	N/A
Global Health Research Initiative (GHRI)	Mid term review: Focus on Capacity Building and Evaluation Framework, Teasdale-Corti Global Health Research Partnership, Program Evaluation Final review HIV/AIDS Prevention Trials Capacity Building Project Evaluation ($25,000) External Review	N/A
Think Tank Initiative	N/A	N/A
Information and Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D)		
Pan Asia	Information Society Innovation Fund Project Evaluation Digital Review of Asia and Pacific Project Evaluation External Review	PAN Gender Program Evaluation Developing Evaluation Capacity in ICT4D Project Evaluation LIRNE Asia Project Evaluation

Program Initiative	New Evaluations	On-Going Evaluations
Institute for Connectivity in the Americas/Connectivity and Equity in the Americas (ICA/CEA)	External Review	N/A
ACACIA	LOGIN II - Records Management for Improved Public Service Administration Against Corruption Project Evaluation The Pan African Research Agenda on the Pedagogical Integration of Information and Communication Technologies II Thematic Evaluation Global Change: Collecting the Evidence and Measuring Change in African Communities on Climate Change, Food Security, Natural Resources Management and Land Use Project Evaluation External Review	Gender Program Evaluation ($50,000) Acacia Networks Program Evaluation ($400,000) Intégration des technologies de l'information et de la communication dans la gouvernance locale au Sénégal Project Évaluation ($25,000)
Telecentre.org	Building a Community Information and Communications Technology Network in Mozambique Project Evaluation Assessment of Helpdesk Initiatives Project Evaluation External Review	N/A

Program Initiative	New Evaluations	On-Going Evaluations
Innovation Policy and Science (IPS)		
Information, Technology and Society (ITS)	Innovation, Collaboration and Linkages Project Evaluation ($20,000) Impact of Grant and Capacity-Building (RoKS Competitions) Project Evaluation Genetically Modified Organisms, Public Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions in India Project Recipient Self-Evaluation ($10,000–15,000) Biosafety Management of Genetically Modified Organisms, China Project Evaluation ($10-15,000) Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Reviews (STIPRs) Program Evaluation ($60,000–80,000) External Review	IPS Strategy on Way Forward in Science Journalism Project Evaluation
Challenge Fund	International Partnership Initiative Project Evaluation ($15,000)	N/A

Program Initiative	New Evaluations	On-Going Evaluations
Other Program Units		
Canadian Partnerships	N/A	External Review ($155,000)
Partnership and Business Development Division (PBDD)	Capacity Building in Resource Mobilization Program (CBRM) Project Evaluation ($40,000)	N/A
Evaluation Unit	Evaluability Assessment of the Centre's Flex Funds, Strategic Evaluation ($30,000) External Review	Devolution, Strategic Evaluation ($70,000)
Communications Division	N/A	Large Conferences Strategic Evaluation in Partnership with the Evaluation Unit and PBDD ($75,000)

Annex 3: Evaluation Reports Received by the Evaluation Unit 2008–2009

Project- and Program-Level Evaluation Reports Received

Date, **Title**, Author(s)	Inventory Number	Related PA, PI	Projects Covered	Period Covered	Country/ Region
1. November 2003, **International Forum on Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health***, Gioconda Ortega-Alairie*	629	ENRM, Ecohealth	100840 100749	2000–2003	Global
2. September 2006, **SciDev Evaluation Report,** *Andrew Barnett*	630	IPS, ITS	103104 102165 101040	2001–2006	Global
3. November 2006, **IDRC at the XVI International AIDS Conference,** *Nasreen Jessani*	631	SEP, GEH	103875	2006–2007	Global
4. September 2007, **Review of the Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) Network and Assessment of Its Achievements***, Michael Ward, Aimé Gogue, Mario Lamberte*	632	SEP, GGP	101378	2002–2007	Global
5. November 2007, **Evaluation of International Lawyers and Economists Against Poverty***, Tom Pengelly, Bernard Wood, Sisule Musungu, Tamara Asamoah*	633	SEP, GGP	102829 103286 105214	2002–2007	Africa and the Caribbean
6. January 2008, **An Evaluation of the Community-Based Natural Resources Management Program in Bhutan,** *Julian Gonsalves*	634	ENRM, RPE	102569	2004–2008	Bhutan
7. February 2008, **External Review and Impact Assessment of the African Highlands Initiative***, Mulugetta Mekuria*	635	ENRM, RPE	005297 101697	2002–2008	ESARO

Date, **Title,** Author(s)	Inventory Number	Related PA, PI	Projects Covered	Period Covered	Country/ Region
8. February 2008, **Rapport de consultation sur l'évaluation des projets collaboratifs de l'ICRAF financés par le CRDI de 1997 à 2007,** Mamadou Djimdé, Sibiri Ouedraogo	636	ENRM, RPE	102178 100832 101778 102443	1997–2007	Sub-Saharan Africa, WARO
9. March 2008, **Cities Farming for the Future: Mid Term Review,** Yves Cabannes, Margaret Pasquini	637	ENRM, UPE	103076	2005-2010	Global
10. April 2008, **GK3 Conference Evaluation,** GAN-NET and Keystone	638	ICT4D, ACACIA	104719 104875 104809 104814 104629 104725	N/A	Global
11. May 2008, **Evaluation of WARO Council of Regional Advisors and its Activities,** Michael Bassey	639	WARO	100993 101682	2001–2008	West Africa
12. May 2008, **Institutional Evaluation of WRC Research Competitions Program,** Melissa MacLean	640	SEP, WRC	101176 102076 103574	2002–2008	Sub-Saharan Africa, WARO
13. May 2008, **Judicial Observatory Project (Phase II),** Kimberly Inksater	641	SEP, PCD	102608	2002–2008	Central America, Guatemala
14. May 2008, **SAS^2 (Social Analysis Systems) Evaluation Report**, Ricardo Ramirez	642	ENRM, RPE	102600 100836	2001–2008	Global
15. July 2008, **Formative Evaluation of PAN's Networking Approach,** Mary Jane Real, Ricardo Wilson-Grau	643	ICT4D, PAN ASIA	102042 103669	2003-2008	Asia

Date, Title, Author(s)	Inventory Number	Related PA, PI	Projects Covered	Period Covered	Country/ Region
16. July 2008, **Review of RITC Pilot Mentorship Programme for Tobacco Control Researchers,** Anne Bernard	644	SEP, GEH, RITC	103773	2006–2008	Global
17. August 2008, **African Technology Policy Studies Network,** Amitav Rath, Rasigan Maharajh, Kathryn Touré, Moses Mbangwana, Christopher Smart, Onguéné Essono	645	IPS, ITS	104316 102611 101339 920418	1998–2007	Sub-Saharan Africa, ESARO
18. August 2008, **Gender Evaluation, Final Report on Phase 1, 2, and 3,** Neena Sachdeva, Clara Jimeno, Dana Peebles	646	SEP, GEH	N/A	Phase 1 2002–2006 Phase 2 2006–2011	Global
19. September 2008, **External Evaluation Report of the Genetic Resources Policy Initiative (GRPI),** Patricia Kameri-Mbote, C.S. Srinivasan	647	ENRM, RPE	100647	2001–2007	Sub-Saharan Africa, ESARO, WARO
20. September 2008, **Review Report Health and Dietary Diversity in Yemen,** Malek Batal	648	ENRM, Ecohealth	103153	2006–2008	Yemen
21. October 2008, **Institutional Evaluation of the Canadian Council for Learned Societies,** Kate McLaren, Paul Turcot	649	SID, Canadian Partnerships	920807 002671 003735 004154 100540 101364 103792 104588	1993–2008	Global

Date, **Title,** Author(s)	Inventory Number	Related PA, PI	Projects Covered	Period Covered	Country/ Region
22. October 2008, **Mid-Term Review of the DFID/IDRC Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (CCAA) Research and Capacity Development Program**, Andrew Watkingson, Smail Khennas, Alison Misselhorn, Anthony Footitt	650	ENRM, CCAA	N/A	2006-2008	Africa
23. December 2008, **Evaluation of the Canada-Latin America and the Caribbean Research Exchange Grants Programme (LACREG)**, Dean Pallen	651	SID, Canadian Partnerships	101783 004097	1998–2006	Latin America and the Caribbean, Canada

External Reviews and Strategic Evaluation Reports Received

External Reviews, Date, **Title,** Author(s)	**Inventory Number**
1. June 2008, **Economy and Environment Program for Southeast Asia (EEPSEA),** Jeffrey R. Vincent	652
2. November 2008, **Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health (Ecohealth),** Jacobo Finkelman, Nancy MacPherson, Ellen Silbergeld, Jakob Zinsstag	653
3. November 2008, **Rural Poverty and Environment (RPE),** Arun Agrawal, Nancy Dickson, Archana Paktar, Stephen A. Vosti	654
4. December 2008, **Urban Poverty and the Environment (UPE),** Patricia McCarney, Riadh Tappuni, Axel Drescher	655

Strategic Evaluations, *Date,* Title, *Author(s)*	Inventory Number
5. *February 2008,* **Strategic Evaluation on Capacity Strengthening the Core and the Periphery: Organizational Case Study of the Peru Economic and Social Research Consortium,** *Katrina Rojas, Mariane Arsenault*	656
6. *March 2008,* **Positive Relationship Work: Organizational Case Study of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC),** *Terri Willard*	657
7. *July 2008,* **IDRC's Participation in Large Conferences, Phase One Background Paper: How and Why IDRC Participates,** *Laura Haylock*	658
8. *September 2008,* **IDRC's Strategic Evaluation of Capacity Development: A Cross-Case Analysis,** *Abra Adamo*	659
9. *September 2008,* **Design and Implementation of Competitive Grants Processes,** *Tricia Wind*	660
10. *October 2008,* **Developing Organizational Capacity in Cambodia: Case Study of the Ministry of Environment,** *Cor Veer*	661
11. *November 2008,* **IDRC Strategic Evaluation of Capacity Development: Doing Things Better: How Capacity Development Results Bring About Change,** *Peter Taylor, Alfredo Ortiz*	662
12. *January 2009,* **A Partnership of Peers: Organizational Case Study of the International Centre for Agriculture in Dry Areas (ICARDA),** *Stephen Tyler*	663
13. *February 2009,* **Learning by Doing: Reflections on IDRC's Strategy in Action,** *Michael Quinn Patton, Patricia Patrizi*	664

Annex 4: Impact Evaluation Highlight

Impact Evaluation for Improving Development (IE4ID): Rethinking, Reshaping

March 2009

Impact evaluation is one of many significant contributors to improving development - increasing effectiveness, empowerment, equity, poverty alleviation, efficiency, legitimacy and sustainability. But if done badly, or inappropriately, impact evaluation can: waste scarce resources, reinforce inequalities, promote wider adoption of unsuitable practices and undermine good practices. Development in the 21st century is increasingly affected by global systems, strategies and policies. Impact evaluation must address these realities.

The action agenda proposed for IE4ID in this document involves three parts. First, it describes how we need to **rethink** impact evaluation by focusing specifically on the nature of development, and how impact evaluation processes and findings can and should contribute to better development. Second, it describes how we need to **reshape** IE4ID, using different methods and strategies to rigorously conduct and support use of impact evaluation. Finally, it identifies essential steps to fundamentally **reform** the enabling environment of impact evaluation for improving development. International cooperation will be required between commissioners and practitioners for IE4ID to occur in this way.

Rethinking Impact Evaluation

1. **Impact evaluation can and should contribute to improved development**
   *Improving the quality of information is important, but it is not sufficient for impact evaluation to make significant contributions. Impact evaluation **of** development should be deliberately undertaken **for** development.*

   MAKE A DIFFERENCE

   - **Plan to meet the needs of the intended users of the impact evaluation** – This requires involving intended users in the process of evaluation to ensure it meets their needs. Potential users of IE4ID are more diverse than donors and governments.
   - **Manage the impact of the impact evaluation itself** – The process of conducting an impact evaluation can have positive and negative effects, which must be actively managed.
   - **Evaluate impact evaluation in terms of its contribution to improved development** – Follow the evaluation standards so that quality balances both technical merit and utility.

2. **Impact evaluation can and should suit the nature of development**
   *Development initiatives in the 21st century are often **interrelated**, **complicated** and **complex**.*

   WAG THE TAIL

   - **Match methods to the need** – Problem analysis, goals and development initiatives should not be adjusted to match prevailing evaluation methods. The dog (development) should wag the tail (impact evaluation).
   - **Engage the full range of stakeholders in the development process** - including governments and donor agencies along with increasingly important actors such as traditional authorities, civil society organizations, private sector firms, partnerships and networks. What is understood by "development" and "improved development" must be addressed openly by the full range of stakeholders.
   - **Prioritize citizens as primary constituents** – as central partners in the development process, as intended users of evaluation findings, as those who lead processes to hold governments and other organizations to account, as well as providers of evidence about results.
   - **Integrate an assessment of global dynamics** – Impact evaluation must recognize that global systems, strategies and policies powerfully shape development in the 21st century.

Reshaping Impact Evaluation

3. **Impact evaluation can and should be embedded within robust systems of monitoring, assessment and learning**
   Evaluations must be embedded in transparent and effective systems for impact planning, assessment and learning that include all relevant stakeholders, including primary constituents.
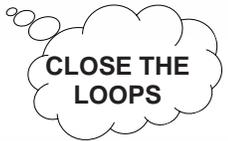
   CLOSE THE LOOPS

   - **Integrate impact evaluation within robust systems of monitoring and evaluation** – in order to create synergies between real time adaptation and improvements with longer-term assessment of results.
   - **Include effective support for knowledge uptake and translation** - through more appropriate reporting and through active support for the users of impact evaluation to adapt knowledge to different situations and time.

4. **Impact evaluation can and should produce a comprehensive picture**
Evaluation must provide balanced assessments.
- **Include intended and unintended, positive and negative impacts.**
- **Assess livelihoods, rights, equity, gender, justice and sustainability as well as income and health.**
- **Assess the distribution of benefits and costs of initiatives** – Evaluation should report impacts on the most disadvantaged, across various groups as well as average impacts.
- **Address legitimacy, efficiency and sustainability as well as effectiveness**.
- **Evaluate beyond the boundaries of the initiative –** know how global systems, strategies and policies actually affect local actions and vice versa.

> **AVOID A NARROW FOCUS**

5. **Impact evaluation can and should explain how and why impacts occur**
Impact evaluation needs to assist knowledge translation about what works, under what conditions, how and why, and hence how success might be achieved in other places and times.
- **Articulate an explicit theory of change** – Rigorous impact evaluation should be based on, and further elaborate theories of change.
- **Investigate causal mechanisms and the contexts in which they operate** – Data collection and analysis need to investigate how context enables or prevents the causal mechanisms that produce impacts.

> **UNDERSTAND HOW AND FOR WHOM**

6. **Impact evaluation can and should draw from methodological developments in the natural and social sciences**
Efforts to improve the rigour and utlity of impact evaluation are hampered by conceptualisations of science that are inaccurate and outdated.
- **Conduct impact evaluation rigorously** - according to the highest standards of scientific endeavour, drawing appropriately from a broad range of approaches, mixed methods and tools to suit the particular evaluation – being informed by methodological innovations (including dramatic improvements in approaches for causal analysis in the social and natural sciences) and insights from trans-, multi- and interdisciplinary collaboration.

> **BE MORE SCIENTIFIC**

Reforming Impact Evaluation

7. **Rethinking and reshaping impact evaluation requires fundamental reform**
This paper is a call to action to those who want to make impact evaluation relevant, credible, and useful for improved development. To those who want to make a difference, to those who want to bring about change, we extend an invitation to become involved.

> **CHANGE THE SYSTEM**

The changes in the 21st century call for those who govern, commission and manage impact evaluations to conceptualize a broader definition of development. To achieve this they, at the very least, need to:

1. Address the current asymmetries and inequities of north-south evaluation.
2. Strengthen the evaluation architecture and standards among networks and key players.
3. Resource impact evaluation as one element of a robust system for monitoring and evaluation.
4. Adopt a broader range of reporting techniques for a broader set of impact evaluation users.

Those practicing impact evaluation need, at the very least, need to:

1. Develop and adapt rigorous approaches and mixed methods for impact evaluation.
2. Evaluate the global systems, strategies and policies that impact development.
3. Build a diverse and inclusive network to share findings and learning about impact evaluation.
4. Increase the evaluative capacity of all development practitioners including suppliers and users of impact evaluation.

Let us not forget that we are privileged to work in a field where our evaluation findings and processes can change lives for the better. This is not to be taken lightly or be lost in irrelevant squabbles. There is much to do, let's get to work.

Annex 5: Senior Management Response

The Senior Management Committee has reviewed the *Annual Corporate Evaluation Report 2009.* The *Report* serves to remind us of the uses of the Centre's evaluation activities: furthering the accountability and learning elements of the evaluation process; and creating tools and a body of knowledge in the growing domain of evaluating research for development.

In terms of specific evaluation activity, the *Report* provides information on the unusually large number of evaluations conducted during 2007-08 (Section 5). Management noted the slight decrease in the quality of the reports (Chart 3) and will continue to monitor this figure in future to assess whether this is a temporary dip in an otherwise longer term upward trend or something that merits action. Similarly, Management supports the view (Chart 1 and related text) that as part of the "field building" mission of the Centre's evaluation activities, every effort must be made to enlarge the pool of qualified evaluators in developing countries.

Management appreciated the brief discussion of Impact Evaluation (Section 4.1). In light of the considerable time and resources being devoted to this subject in segments of the development community, the Evaluation Unit is asked to take the lead in organizing presentations on the subject to staff and managers by experts, followed by a Management discussion on how the Centre might best calibrate its own Outcome Mapping approach.

This *Report* also served to catalyze a discussion on the several objectives of the Evaluation Unit, which include:

- Managing external reviews of programs every five years;
- Working with Centre programs and other units to build evaluative thinking and learning into their work;
- Conducting strategic evaluations on topics that cross-cut Centre activities (for example, on organizational development);
- Building the field of evaluation for research, particularly in developing countries.

In continuing the discussion on the question of ensuring that the size and scope of evaluation operations at the Centre are in conformity with the resources available, two specific issues merit further study. First, in rare instances, Monitoring and Evaluation officers are "embedded" within large Programs; in other cases, the central Evaluation Unit pursues these goals. The merits and demerits of this approach – which also occurs in the area of Communications – might be reassessed to ensure that the instances of embedding are the right ones. Second, vigilance should be maintained in ensuring that the work with grassroots organizations described in Section 2.3 conforms with the Centre's primary focus on strengthening research systems in developing countries. These questions will be taken up by Management in the months ahead, and will also serve as the basis for the regular (five year) external review of the Evaluation Unit scheduled for Spring 2010.

As in past years, this year's *Report* presents the richness of the range of evaluative activities at the Centre. Overall, Management endorses the *Report*, and looks forward to receiving Governors' views on it.