

IDRC CRDI

*IDRC's Fellowships and Awards Program 2013 Tracer Study*

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*Contributions to Research, Policy, and Institutions*

IDRC CRDI

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*This publication reports on research carried out by an IDRC awardee as part of his internship requirements, and is available in its language of origin only.*

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## Acronyms

ADS	Australian Development Scholarships
CANWIN	Canadian Window on International Development Award
CGS	Canada Graduate Scholarship
CIHR	Canadian Institute for Health Research
F&A	Fellowships and Awards
IDRA	IDRC Doctoral Research Award
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILAC	Institutional Learning and Change Initiative
INGO	International NGO
NSERC	Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PDA	Professional Development Award
PMO	Program management officer
RAR	Research Award Recipient
RBM	Results Based Management
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
YCRA	Young Canadian Researchers Award

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## Executive Summary

Fellowships and Awards (formerly the Centre Training and Awards Program) is the focal point of training within IDRC. By supporting academic study and offering opportunities for hands-on field research experience, IDRC helps countries of the South gain a critical mass of trained and experienced researchers to promote development in their regions, gives young Canadians and citizens of developing countries an opportunity to participate actively in international development, and fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange.

This study traces IDRC award recipients between 1995 and 2005 to better understand how recipients perceive the influence of their awards during their mid-careers. It follows two tracer studies undertaken in 2007 and 2010. The first, *Tracer Study of Awards Programs Supported by IDRC* (2007), by Michael Graham traced 76% of award holders that held five IDRC awards between 1995 and 2005. The second, Elena Chernikova's *Tracer Study 2010 – A report on Award Holders* (2010), updated the contact and employment information of 1995-2008 recipients of these same five awards.<sup>1</sup> The goal of the current study, carried out in 2013, is to trace 'core' and thematic award recipients and evaluate IDRC's contribution to individuals' continuing work in research and policy. A secondary goal is to assess the influence these recipients have had on governments and other institutions around the globe. A literature review situated the study in the context of evaluating awards programs. From this literature review, a conceptual framework (Contribution Analysis) was chosen to guide the study and to develop a theory of change. This helped identify indicators and construct an appropriate survey to gather data. A basic quantitative data analysis was then undertaken, followed by an analysis of open-ended qualitative questions designed to elicit responses that could not be predicted categorically and to explore how and why awards make a difference to recipients given other factors of influence. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for IDRC and for future tracer attempts are provided.

This report is based on the responses of 130 individuals who received IDRC awards between 1995 and 2005. Of the respondents, the majority (55%) received doctoral research awards to support travel and research for their doctoral work on international development. Key findings include:

- The majority of award recipients (57%) continue to work in Canada, but less than found previously. A 2007 survey had found that 84% of the 1995-2005 cohort of award recipients worked in Canada. The increasing number of awardees that work outside of Canada might be attributed to students completing their studies and returning to their countries of origin.
- Two-thirds of respondents continue to work in development. The majority (60%) work in universities and colleges, while 11% work in government agencies or departments, 10% in non-governmental organizations, 6% in research institutions and 5% in international organizations.
- 86% found that the award made a great contribution to their careers, 75% noted the award made a great contribution to their research skills, and 75% noted that the awards were very relevant to

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 for a list of awards traced as part of this study.

developing networks and contacts in their field. These person-to-person connections often became the basis of future research collaborations and continued knowledge exchange between Canada and the rest of the world.

- The study also found that IDRC awards are highly regarded by the research community in Canada and abroad as a key source of field research-specific funding for young scholars. Many respondents considered that IDRC awards are one of the best educational experiences for young Canadian and international graduate students. 85% noted that the IDRC award was very relevant to enhancing their resumés and 69% said that it was very relevant to their career advancement.

The responses received demonstrate the importance of field research-specific funding for graduate students. They provide enhanced research and analytical skills, while being directly relevant to the recipients' studies and careers. IDRC awards are highly regarded by those who received them and by others in the international development community, and are seen as a unique opportunity to enhance doctoral research by providing an opportunity for in-depth field work. This work often becomes the basis on which recipients push the frontiers of their future work, opening new and unique avenues of policy and research influence.

# 1. Methodology and Research Process

## 1.1 Research Problem and Purpose

Assessing the outcomes of scholarships and awards can be challenging. Strong information/knowledge management systems readily capture and measure outputs and immediate outcomes. However, intermediate and ultimate outcomes are more difficult to assess. These post-award results, over which there may not be direct control or clear causal links, are not often captured when evaluating award programs. To date, most alumni studies, including those of IDRC, have focused on short-term outputs and outcomes, such as rates of completion, skills gained, and employment. These data are crucial when measuring the short-term impacts of programs, but lack the depth to demonstrate higher level outcomes needed to assess the wider value of awards programs, including contributions to research, policy, and institutions. IDRC had anecdotal information about these outcomes, but had not examined them systematically. The following objectives were formulated:

1. to determine 1995-2005 award recipients' current careers and locations;
2. to confirm that IDRC awards enable recipients to complete their studies and continue on their chosen career paths;
3. to assess if IDRC awards contribute to recipient's continued involvement in research and policy making;
4. to assess award recipient's involvement in the broader development community; and,
5. to assess how award recipients influence the institutions they work for.

## 1.2 Research Plan

A research plan was developed to guide each stage of the study. A review of relevant literature formed the theoretical basis for the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework used Contribution Analysis, developed by John Mayne, to build a theory of change to distinguish outputs from immediate, intermediate, and ultimate outcomes, as well as identify assumptions, risks, and other factors of influence. Indicators, based on the literature review and IDRC-staff perceptions, were selected that could provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of success. Award recipients were identified and contacted via an online survey tool to collect data. Collation and analysis followed, upon which findings, recommendations, and conclusions are based.

## 1.3 Theoretical investigation/Literature review

A review of previous F&A tracer studies, tracer studies undertaken by similar awards programs, and other relevant literature provided the basis for the investigation. Discussions were held with Fellowships and



Awards staff to delineate the purpose of this study from previous tracers undertaken and to gather key institutional knowledge of awards program results.

### **1.3.1 IDRC Sources**

Michael Graham's *Tracer Study of Awards Programs Supported by IDRC* (2007) examined the career paths of the recipients of five IDRC (Research Awards, Professional Development Awards, Young Canadian Researchers Awards, Doctoral Research Awards, and Canadian Window on International Development Awards). The study examined the awards' impacts on careers and lives of award recipients, and asked them to rate the importance of administrative, programmatic, and professional development aspects of receiving an award. It found that the responding award recipients felt that their support from IDRC was a very positive experience, both personally and professionally. The opportunity to expand their experience in international development and the opportunity to work overseas were rated as highly important. Very few altered their chosen career paths, but did refine their interest in international development and credited IDRC for playing a crucial role in finding employment. The study established contact with 70% of award recipients during the period of 1995-2005.

Michael Graham, *International Tracer Study* (2008) was undertaken to update contact information and re-establish contact with key individuals and institutions in developing countries, and obtain some insight into the careers of these award holders. The targeted group were those who received awards between 1971 and 1992, and so examined the positions of influence that IDRC award recipients reached by the end of their careers.

Elena Chernikova's *Tracer Study 2010 – A report on Award Holders* (2010) updated the contact details and employment information of award recipients between 1995 and 2008. It provided a geographical distribution of award holders, current employment (by sector and field). Findings include that most award recipients choose careers in academia, most often teaching and researching in the fields of Geography, Environmental Studies, and International Development, and that there is an appetite for further contact with one another and IDRC. Recommendations include: creating a map of IDRC award recipients; holding contact information in a searchable and sortable excel table; to create an alumni mailing list; and, to use professional networking websites to maintain the current contact details of award recipients.

These past studies were successful at re-establishing contact with many IDRC award recipients. Each provided a great deal of insight into the importance of various administrative aspects of the program and several key recommendations to IDRC staff. Several of these recommendations have been enacted, while others are ongoing projects of F&A staff. Moreover, the studies provided a number of key areas to be measured and refined including: other awards supported by IDRC; sectors and types of work; networks created during award tenure; and, the relevance and contribution of various aspects of awards to personal and professional life.

This said, the 2007 and 2010 surveys did not distinguish between those award recipients who had recently received awards and those who had received their awards up to 15 years prior to the tracer study. The international tracer study re-established contact with those who were at the ends of their careers. There

was a lack of systematic knowledge of how recipients perceived the awards during their mid-careers, and the intermediate and ultimate objectives of the program.

### **1.3.2 Other literature reviewed**

Further to the review of IDRC sources, a brief investigation was carried out into other tracer studies and methods of evaluating complex programs.

The *Mozambique In-Country Scholarship Assistance Scheme (ICSAS) Independent Completion Review* (2009) assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the ICSAS program. Rather than examining the post-award period, it focussed on the achievement of academic qualifications. It noted that examining post-scholarship impacts could allow conclusions to be drawn about award recipients' contributions to development outcomes, and that programs need to give more attention to outcomes that occur after the award period. This study affirmed the need to look at post-award impacts.

The *Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) Program and Related Programs Review* (2009). This evaluation examined the need for the CGS Program and its consistency with Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and government priorities. The evaluation was based on a mixture of qualitative evidence (including program documentation, and key informant interviews) and quantitative evidence (including administrative data and a large survey of program applicants). A survey was distributed to three groups of students. One group had received a CGS award, a second had received other awards administered by the three agencies, and a third had applied for awards but did not receive them. The third group provided the study with a control against which to measure the relative success of the CGS scholars and the program.

The possibility of conducting a tracer study of IDRC award recipients that might incorporate such a control group was considered, but rejected. This was due to perceived issues surrounding sensitivity and objectivity of asking a group that had not received an award to evaluate that impact on their careers. Further, for reasons of privacy IDRC does not typically keep extensive records of those who applied but did not receive awards.

## **1.4 Contribution analysis**

After the initial review, further conversation with F&A staff helped determine important areas for the study: (a) how IDRC awards enable recipients to work in research and policy; (b) the extent to which and why award recipients remain involved in the development community; and, (c) how IDRC award recipient influence the institutions they work for. With these general objectives in place, a brief investigation of other scholarship and award evaluations was conducted to determine how IDRC might best investigate (a)-(c). Michelle Crawley, PMO for Fellowships and Awards, shared her summary of two sessions of the

*International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET)*, one of which addressed assessing the outcomes and impacts of complex programs using contribution analysis.

Contribution analysis is a method to explore and demonstrate the association between program activities and intended outcomes. This acknowledges the complexity of attributing change yet seeks to reduce the uncertainty of knowledge about the contribution while accepting that other factors may or may not have influence change. By creating a plausible story of change, this type of analysis seeks to evaluate to what extent observed results can be attributed to an intervention rather than other factors of influence. It is particularly useful in situations where experimental or quasi-experimental designs that might answer these questions are not feasible or practical (Mayne, 2001).

An ILAC (Institutional Learning and Change Initiative) Brief “Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect” (Mayne, 2008) provides 6 steps to contribution analysis: 1) setting out the problem; 2) developing a theory of change and risks; 3) Gathering existing evidence; 4) Assembling and assessing the contribution story; 5) Seeking out additional evidence; and, 6) Revising and strengthening the contribution story. Causality is inferred from a reasonable theory of change, the implementation of program activities, the theory of change is verified with evidence, and that other factors of influence are assessed and recognized for their contribution.

A recent study of the Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) program, *Australian Development Scholarships: Returns on Investment* (Nolan, 2011) used contribution analysis to guide a comparative analysis of ADS awards in Mongolia and China from 1996-2006. While ADS scholars are generally recognized for their contribution to their home countries, 15 country level reviews and two broader reviews had failed to adequately appraise the broader impacts and performance outcomes of the program. The study therefore aimed to assess the successes of the program in achieving these broader objectives as perceived by those who facilitated or participated in the program.

To evaluate perceived successes in meeting program objectives and to assess what has been achieved through the program Nolan used a Results Based Management (RBM) framework rationale to measure progress and Contribution Analysis as a research method. This framework measured not the direct inputs and outputs of the program, but instead attempted to understand the contributions of the program to stated objectives and the lives of scholars. Methodologically, the study is based in a program logic chart developed through a literature review and interviews with program facilitators. This was used to understand the ‘theory of change’ of the program by visualizing linkages between specific activities and particular outcomes to understand how the ADS program works to make a difference and achieve its objectives. To assess the contribution of the program to its ‘ultimate outcomes’, the author undertook in-depth interviews of ADS recipients and facilitators to identify when and if the program has made a significant contribution to specific outputs and outcomes.

Contribution analysis was selected as the conceptual framework to guide the exploration into the contribution the F&A program makes to the careers of award recipients and the extent to which F&A can claim a contribution to research, policy, and the broader development community.

## 1.5 Theory of Change

Based on this theoretical investigation, Mayne's (2001) model of contribution analysis was used to guide the exploration into the contribution IDRC awards make to the careers of award recipients and the extent to which awards can claim to contribution to research, policy, and the broader development community. A theory of change (Figure 1) was developed to show the links between activities, outcomes, and other factors of influence. Indicators were selected by gathering existing data (a literature review, previous tracer studies, and IDRC staff's institutional memory). A tracer survey was developed to gather additional evidence based on award recipients' own perception of the awards' relevance and contribution to their careers.

<b>Figure 1: Fellowships and Awards Theory of Change</b>		
	<b>Results Chain</b>	<b>Theory of Change: Assumptions and Risks</b>
Final (ultimate) Outcomes	Award recipients contribute to research and policy directions Award recipients contribute to the broader development community Award recipients influence the institutions they work for (setting research/policy/training agendas)	<u>Assumptions:</u> Awardees will achieve positions of influence Awardees network with colleagues, reach out to others Award outputs (theses, news items, etc.) are used by others <u>Risks:</u> Awardees are unable to/do not reach out to peers Research conducted and skills acquired during the award tenure are not applicable to their current employers
Intermediate outcomes	Career advancement Publications Working in field of choice Building new knowledge and skills	<u>Assumptions:</u> Awards/scholarships are a boon to the CV Recipients will publish their research Students are exposed to new methodologies and research techniques <u>Risks:</u> Students change their fields Unable to produce research Awards did not contribute to enhanced skills
Immediate Outcomes	More graduates / PhD completion Experience conducting field research Enhanced research skills Personal growth and international outlook Individual capacity building	<u>Assumptions:</u> Awards contribute to field research and PhD completion The awards provide a 'hands-on' in country experience (if applicable) <u>Risks:</u> Students are unable to complete their research 'Hands-on' experience is shorter/narrower than anticipated Unable to place students with mentors or workplaces
Outputs	Graduate students/others receive financial support for field research and/or internships Award recipients receive comments and/or mentorship Final reports, PhD theses	<u>Assumptions:</u> F&A is targeting the rights schools and students F&A provides appropriate comments, mentors, and placement <u>Risks:</u> Comments/mentors are not heeded by the research awardees F&As reach is too narrow Workplace is not conducive to research

## 1.6 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Method

The study examined the perceptions of IDRC award recipients to determine the extent to which IDRC can claim to have met its objectives. However, constraints such as a lack of time and capacity to interview award recipients meant that interviews could not form the primary method of data collection. As such, an online survey was chosen as the primary means of data collection. The survey was designed to better understand:

1. The relevance of the award to:
  - a. studies
  - b. knowledge and skills
  - c. to their careers
2. The contribution of the award to recipient's continued involvement in:
  - a. the development community
  - b. research
  - c. policy
3. The influence of award recipients on institutions

A mix of quantitative questions and qualitative open-ended questions were used to explore these areas. The purpose of the quantitative metrics was to update contact information; identify articles and books written by award recipients; determine the extent to which recipients have maintained contact with those they met during their award tenure; determine the perceived relevance and contribution of the award to their studies, careers; and continued involvement in research, policy, and the development community. This quantitative component was based on predetermined categories (developed from previous tracer studies, a literature review, and conversations with F&A staff). The purpose of the qualitative component was to elicit responses that could not be predicted categorically and to explore how and why awards make a difference to recipients given other factors of influence. This component consisted of 6 open-ended questions which focussed on how the IDRC supported work was used; why the award contributed to their career; how the award contributed to their continued involvement in policy and research; and to what extent awardees are implicated in the broader international development community.

## 1.7 Data Collection

An online tool was selected as the primary means of collecting data. Surveys in both official languages were created. The contact information for 548 award recipients was retrieved from an internal IDRC database and uploaded to an online distribution tool.

Of the 548 emails sent, a large number (266) were undeliverable. Of these 266, the majority were institutional email addresses (tied to universities or employers) that no longer exist as the award holders have changed their occupations. A smaller proportion was associated with internet service providers who

had ceased to operate. Of the 266 unreachable award recipients, alternate emails were found for 102 through online web searches. The majority of these emails were found on the institutional websites of universities, followed by the websites of government agencies and personal websites. These 102 additional contacts were uploaded to and contacted via the online distribution tool. Additionally, social media was used to further extend the reach of the survey. Messages were placed on IDRC's official Facebook and Twitter, and the IDRC Latin America and the Caribbean October Newsletter. Four additional responses resulted from this outreach.

## 1.8 Limitations

The most significant limitation was in tracing the contact information of former award recipients due to outdated information, largely due contact emails being associated with institutions at which award recipients were no longer studying or employed. While social media and IDRC newsletters generated some additional responses, the most effective means of tracing contact information was through web based searches for former awardees using a number of techniques (such as "'full name' + 'IDRC'", "'full name + 'university of study'", etc.).

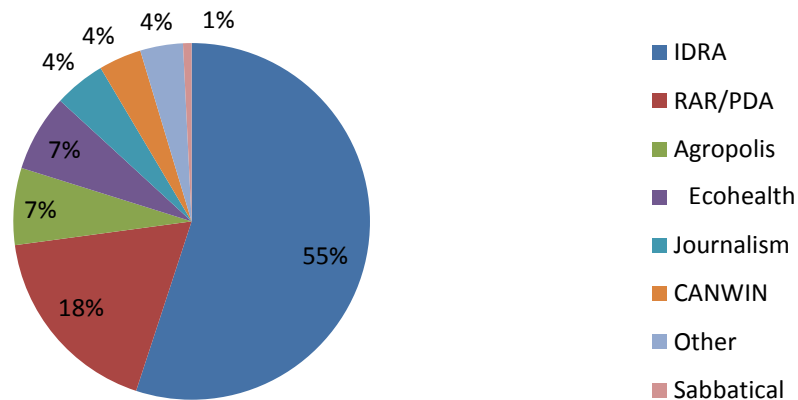
The method used to trace former award recipients introduces an element of coverage bias into the sample population. Those awardees that were traced online were visible, and hence potentially more "successful" than those that were not traced online. Furthermore, visibility online was highly dependent on the type of institution an award recipient works for. It was far more likely to find updated contact information for those whose institutions provide public biographies (most often university professors). Thus, there is likely to be under coverage of those awardees on which the impact of the award has not been as great as those traced. As a result, the survey results were analyzed for internally consistent results.

## 2. Findings

The following findings are based on 130 responses received to the survey. Of the 548 contacted award recipients, 120 submitted complete responses, while 10 submitted partial responses of high enough quality to be considered complete, for a completion rate of 24%. As the purpose of this study was to examine the overall contributions of awards to recipients' careers, the findings are not broken down comparatively except where otherwise noted.

The 120 responses were composed of recipients of seven types of awards as follows: IDRA (55%); RAs/PDAs (18%); Agropolis and Ecohealth (7% each); Journalism and Canwin (4% each); and Sabbatical (1%). 4% of respondents did not indicate the award they received.

**Figure 2: Responses by Award Type n=130**



## 2.1 Location and Employment

### Where do they live?

**Figure 3: Award Recipients by Location (n=130)**

Response	Percentage	Count
Canada	46%	60
Africa	17%	22
Latin America	9%	12
Europe	8%	11
United States of America	8%	10
Asia	6%	8
Middle East	2%	2
Caribbean	2%	2
Prefer not to answer	2%	2
Australia/NZ	1%	1

The tracer found that the plurality (47%) of respondents live in Canada. This is followed by Africa (17%), Latin America (9%), Europe and the United States (8% each), Asia (6%), the Middle East and Caribbean (2% each), and Australia/New Zealand (1%). As previous studies have found, IDRC award recipients are working not only within Canada, but around the globe.

The locations of award recipients are a significant change since the 2007 and 2010 studies, which each found that the majority of award recipients were working in Canada. This was initially attributed to the inclusion of more types of award recipients in this tracer, some of which targeted students studying in developing countries. However, a comparison of those statistics that are available (for the IDRA/YCRA and Canwin award recipients) from 2007 show

that there is a significant difference in where award recipients are working.

**Figure 4: YCRA, IDRA, and Canwin Recipients by Location**

Response	2007 (n=140)	2013 (n=71)	% change
Canada	84%	57%	-27
US	6%	11%	+5
Latin America	3%	9%	+6
Africa	4%	8%	+4
Asia	4%	8%	+4
Europe	3%	4%	+1
Australia/NZ	1%	1%	-
Caribbean	0	1%	+1
Prefer not to answer	0	1%	+1

While the majority of award recipients still work in Canada, the rate is now 57% rather than 84%. This decrease of 27% is largely explained by respondents working in the United States, Latin America, and Asia.

This indicates that after completing their studies in Canada, many award recipients choose to either return to their countries of origin or choose to work in countries other than Canada. This indicates that 'brain drain' may not be a significant problem, as once award recipients have completed their

studies and gained work experience they choose to return to their countries of origin. It may also indicate that Canadians are likely to work abroad after completing their PhD studies.



## What do they do?

Respondents were asked if they work in development or not. Of 130 respondents, 63% continue to work in development, 33% do not, and 4% chose not to answer. [Figure 5](#) shows the sectors in which they work. These findings are consistent with the findings of the 2007 study, which found that most award recipients are employed by universities, followed by government agencies or departments. The most significant changes from the 2007 study is that no respondents self-identified as students, and that there is a 10% increase in those that work within the university and college sectors.

Neither of these findings are surprising, as the 2007 tracer study targeted award recipients who had recently received their awards and were likely to be completing their studies. Further, gaining employment in the academic sectors can take several years of post-doctoral work and establishing a strong record in academic publications.

**Figure 5: Award Recipients' Sectors of Employment**

Response	2007 (n=140)	2013 (n=130)	% Change
University or college	50%	60%	+10
Government agency or department	10%	12%	+2
NGO/civil society organization	6%	8%	+2
Other (please specify)	9%	5%	-4
Journalism	-	4%	-
Private sector	2%	4%	+2
International organization	2%	4%	+2
Research institution	4%	4%	0
Student/post-doc	27%	0%	-27
Prefer not to answer	-	0%	-

Of those who work in development, the majority (60%) do so within university or college environments. 11% work for government agencies or departments, 10% for NGOs and CSOs, 7% are in other sectors (for example, consulting, parental leave, retired), 6% work for research institutions, and 5% work for international organizations.

The 33% that do not work in development, 53% are in the education sector as professors, 9% are in journalism, 7% did not indicate the sector they work in, and 5% work for government agencies or departments (5%). The remaining responses cannot easily be categorized by field, but 2 respondents indicated that

they are currently unemployed, and one is currently doing post-doctoral work.

This said, many of the respondents noted that they are peripherally involved in development through the courses they teach or the institutions they work for. Many of those that chose 'no' indicated in open-ended questions that while they may not work directly in development, they work in closely related fields and rely on the development experience enabled by the award.

## 2.2 Relevance and contribution of the awards to professional life

After providing updated employment and contact information, respondents were asked to share how their award or fellowship contributed to their academic development and career. They were asked to rate the relevance and contribution of the career to various metrics ([Figure 6](#) and [Figure 7](#)) and rate the overall contribution of the award to their careers ([Figure 8](#), page 14). The goal of these questions were to validate the immediate and intermediate outcomes of the Theory of Change ([Figure 1](#), page 7).

Figure 6: Relevance to Studies and Career (n= 130)

Metric	Very relevant (%)	Somewhat relevant (%)	Not relevant (%)
Financial support	88	5	7
Enhancing your resume	85	14	2
Opportunities to network and develop contacts in your field	75	18	8
The continuation or completion of your studies	73	14	13
Career advancement	69	33	7
Opportunities for research training	67	17	16
Exposure to international organizations	64	22	14
Access to further funding opportunities	55	25	21
Finding employment in your area of interest	54	33	13
Rapid entry into the job market	52	33	15
Obtaining work in development	36	33	31

[Figure 6](#) shows the relevance of the award to various academic and career metrics. These results help show that the awards do achieve the anticipated immediate outcomes outlined in the theory of change. They provide relevant financial support that allows students to conduct field work. They enable recipients to continue or complete their studies, while providing opportunities for research training and can provide access to further funding.

They also help demonstrate that the awards achieve their goals of advancing the careers of award recipients by enhancing their resumes,

providing opportunities to develop contacts in their academic fields and enabling them to find work in their areas of interest.

The category that was least relevant to respondents was the awards relevance to obtaining work in international development. Presumably, most recipients were already interested in development issues when they received the award. However, a full 69% of respondents still rated the award as very or moderately relevant to their obtaining work in development.

Figure 7: Contribution to Knowledge and Skills (n=130)

Metric	Great (%)	Moderate (%)	Minimal (%)	N/A (%)
Research skills	75	17	7	1
Analytic skills	62	27	9	2
Awareness of research institutions and organizations	60	31	7	2
Awareness of research debates and directions	58	28	13	2
Networking skills	54	34	11	2
Interview skills	52	23	14	11
Awareness of policy debates and directions	48	37	12	4
Awareness of policy institutions and organizations	46	42	8	4
Awareness of policy-formulation procedures and frameworks	30	43	20	6
Foreign language skills	26	26	24	24

To enable the ultimate outcomes of award recipients contributing to research and policy, as well as influencing the institutions for which they work, the awards aim to enhance recipients' access to knowledge and training. These questions asked the recipients to rate the contribution the IDRC-funded research made to their knowledge of policy, research, and skills.

The greatest contributions of the funded work were to research (75%) and analytic skills (62%). This was followed by awareness of research institutions/organizations

and research debates/directions. This is unsurprising, given that the awards support field research at the PhD level and provide the opportunity for recipients to enhance their research skills through 'hands-on' work in the field. Further, most awards require recipients to be affiliated with an institution in the developing world where they can receive mentorship, direction, and access to networks.

Awareness of various aspects of policy were significantly less relevant to most respondents. This is likely because the process by which research is used to influence policy is not as clear. Further, the award recipients may be focussed on completing their own work, and the policy implications of their work may not be clear at these early stages of data collection. Finally, academic career advancement prioritizes peer-reviewed publication, and early career academics may not be able to consider the policy impact of their work. After they are established in their careers they may be able to turn their attention to policy, which is likely to be well after IDRC's period of direct or indirect influence.

The most modest contribution of the funded research was to foreign language skills. While further open-ended responses did not provide insight on why this might be, we can infer that many applicants choose to conduct research in areas where their primary or secondary languages are spoken. In addition, award applicants are asked to demonstrate capacity to conduct research in local languages or to budget for interpretation and translation in their applications. This makes it unlikely that award recipients will seriously enhance their foreign language skills through their award tenure.

After rating the categories shown in [Figure 6](#) and [Figure 7](#), respondents were asked to rate the overall contribution of the IDRC award or fellowship to their career. 88% noted that the award made a great contribution, 13% noted that it made a moderate contribution, while 1% noted that it made a minimal

contribution. This is higher than expected, and demonstrates that the awards are perceived as making considerable contributions to the careers of award recipients.

Figure 8: Overall Contribution of Awards (n=130)

Great contribution (%)	Moderate Contribution (%)	Minimal Contribution (%)
86	13	1

To better understand how and why the award contributed to their careers, respondents were then asked “In a short paragraph, please share with us why you chose the rating in the previous question.” Respondents often touched on numerous aspects of the award that contributed to their careers, and also took the opportunity to thank IDRC for the opportunities the award led to. The most common response was that the opportunity to do long term and in depth field research directly led to enhancing their CVs and to rapid employment in their fields of choice. The next most common responses explained the skills and knowledge they gained as part of their field work. They remarked on both the ‘soft’ skills, such as networking and the enhanced ability to enter into collaboration and partnerships with other researchers, as well as the ‘hard’ skills such as research training. Many noted that the networks they developed with colleagues in other countries continue to be relevant to their careers for collaboration and dissemination. An important contribution many shared was that receiving an IDRC award provided confidence and validation of their work. It provided enhanced credibility and visibility to them in setting up networks. Finally, for some the award catalyzed or enhanced their theoretical knowledge of and interest in development. This provided additional motivation to continue along their chosen career paths. All these factors helped award recipients find meaningful employment after their funded research period was finished, and to continue working in the field of their choice.

*“The IDRC award made my field study possible. This study was key to completing my Ph.D. dissertation. Thus, without the award, though I would have completed my dissertation, it would not have been as well researched, or impactful.” – IDRA/YCRA, 1999*

Those who rated it moderate or minimal cited other factors of influence, such as considerable experience in international development prior to receiving an award, other notable awards that contributed equally, and academic support that greatly contributed to their careers. Several noted that the award provided only minimal contact with IDRC before and during the research, which they regretted, and that the award did not enable their understanding of policy formulation.

## 2.3 Award Recipients' Involvement with the Development Community

Award recipients were asked if they maintained any contact (by e-mail, telephone, visit, etc.) with any of the people they met during their award or fellowship tenure, including related or follow-up project work (**Figure 9**, below). The majority of award recipients maintain contact with their supervising professors (74%), research partners (74%), and community members and interviewees (68%). They maintain less contact with staff at IDRC (43%) and their fellow awardees (27%). 23% of respondents maintain contact with others they met throughout their research period.

These results are unsurprising. It is the research partners, professors, and communities that recipients work most closely with during their field work. Most awards do not provide the opportunity for close interaction with IDRC staff, and there is no award recipient network for post-award networking. To increase the influence of its awards, and to help disseminate research outputs, IDRC may wish to consider creating a network to maintain lasting connections among award recipients and between IDRC and award recipients.

Figure 9: Continued Contact with Stakeholders (n=130)

	Yes	No	Not applicable
Research partners	74%	15%	11%
Community members/interviewees	68%	25%	7%
Supervising professors	74%	12%	15%
Staff at IDRC	43%	50%	7%
Fellow awardees	27%	48%	25%
Other	23%	27%	50%

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*"I have also gotten involved in coordination roles of the Brazilian Node for the Community of Practice in Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health in Latin America and Caribbean (CoPEH-LAC); I became the Secretary of the International Association for Ecology & Health since 2009 until now (Ecohealth); I have been invited by the World Bank Institute to take part in a South-South-North group to the exchange of knowledge and better practices of environmental management of coastal areas and freshwater river basins of the Amazonian watershed." – Ecohealth, 2002*

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To further understand award recipients' contributions to the broader development community they were asked five open- and one-closed ended questions. The response rates for these were slightly lower than for other questions, likely because they were not required responses and respondents were able to continue the survey without providing answers.

The responses to these questions indicate that the respondents are actively engaged with others, both within and outside of the development community. The findings are shown in Figure 10. 95% of the respondents stated that they have mentored younger students and colleagues, and 83% have recommended that students or colleagues apply for IDRC awards. 28% have supervised university students who have applied to IDRC awards. 60% have recommended other IDRC sources of funding to their students and colleagues, while 79% have recommended other non-IDRC sources of funding to their students or colleagues.

Figure 10: Further Involvement with the Development Community

	Yes	No	Not applicable	Total Responses
Have mentored younger students or colleagues	95%	6%	0	122
Recommended that students or colleagues apply for IDRC awards	83%	11%	6%	121
Recommended that your students or colleagues apply to other sources of funding in international development	79%	21%	0	123 122
Recommended students or colleagues to other sources of IDRC funding	60%	28%	11%	123
Supervised students who have applied for IDRC awards	28%	67%	5%	122

33 respondents provided longer responses to the open-ended question "Is there anything else you would like to share about your involvement in the international development community?" The majority of the responses indicated that they are involved in the development community through their academic activities (including supervising students, research initiatives, and conferences). Others are actively involved in organizations such as the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development, communities of practice, and other international networks that connect development professions.

Many respondents took the opportunity to recommend that IDRC itself should be more involved with former award recipients. They noted that end-of-award conferences and symposiums would be an appropriate way of connecting with award holders and encouraging post-award collaboration. Others recommended that IDRC form an alumni association for networking purposes and to connect new researchers with experts in their area of interest.

## 2.4 Contribution of IDRC Awards to Recipients' Continued Involvement in Research

To understand if IDRC awards contribute to recipients continued involvement with research, respondents were asked “Would you say that your IDRC award or fellowship contributed to your continued involvement with research?” 88% of respondents noted that it contributed to their continued involvement in research, 6% said it did not, and 6% said this was not applicable to them. The high percentage that said that the award contributed to their involvement in research is not surprising. This was implied by previous studies, but had not been explicitly asked. To better understand how and why this is the case respondents were asked to provide one or two examples of how and in what manner the award contributed to their continued involvement in research. 107 respondents provided longer responses to this prompt, and were largely of high quality though some respondents provided lists of research initiatives they have been involved in. Others shared how they continue to be involved in IDRC supported research. Three overarching, but connected, themes were apparent: 1) in-depth field research led to expertise in a region or topic; 2) access to networks facilitated future collaboration and research; and, 3) new skills and expertise enabled their continuing work.

**In-depth field research** built the foundation for future careers, either within a particular region or on a particular topic. The length of time spent researching and connecting with others helped award recipients conduct relevant and timely research that could then be published. It also allowed them to identify issues and organizations in other countries that they would otherwise have been unaware of. Many were then able to expand on this work in their careers as professors, consultants, NGO staff, etc.

**Access to networks** facilitated future research collaborations and work. These provided access to conferences, contacts, and new directions for subsequent research. On the basis of these enduring personal and professional relationships, award recipients have been able to continue to do field work in their regions of study. In-country institutions that respondents worked with as part of their IDRC funded research continue to be their partners for research and other activities. Many are still engaged with these institutions and collaborate frequently.

**Skills and expertise** that award recipients gained during their field work continue to be highly important for their work. These range from hard skills, such as training in molecular biology and quantitative methodology, to softer

*“My IDRC award(s) started my academic and practice career. IDRC funded almost two years of in-depth ethnographic fieldwork for my PhD. This experience - not just the degree, but the practical learning and people skills - became the cornerstone of my career as an anthropologist/geographer of development. The YCRA Fellowship enabled me to set up durable in-country networks with local colleagues in academia, government and the NGO sector. I've relied on these networks for my scholarly publications, for my own development work (with AusAID) and to launch the research careers of my students. Former IDRC colleagues remain friends and mentors to me and offer me access to a network of insightful, innovative and free-thinking development experts in my region of interest and around the world.” – YCRA/IDRA, 1995*

skills such as writing research proposals and concept notes that have enabled them to access further

funding. Many also noted that they value the practical skills concerning forming research partnerships and logistical aspects of conducting research outside Canada.

## 2.5 Contribution of IDRC Awards to Recipients' Continued Involvement in Policy

To understand if IDRC awards contribute to recipients continued involvement with policy, respondents were asked "Would you say that your IDRC award or fellowship contributed to your continued involvement with policy?" 37% of respondents noted that it contributed to their continued involvement in research, 53% said it did not, and 25% said this was not applicable to them. To better understand how and why this is the case respondents were asked to provide one or two examples of how and in what manner the award contributed to their continued involvement in policy. The quality of responses was quite high, and many shared why the IDRC award did not contribute to their involvement in policy, or why it was not as relevant to their policy-related work.

48 respondents provided longer responses to this prompt. These show that the contribution of IDRC awards to recipients' continued involvement in policy is indirect and not as substantial as the award's contribution to their continued involvement in policy. This is a somewhat unexpected result, given that IDRC often emphasizes research that is relevant to policy. However, the responses provide insight into why some award recipients had greater impact in policy, and how IDRC might increase the policy impact of award recipients. Four clear trends were evident in the analysis of responses that indicated that the award contributed to policy: 1) the organizations award recipients worked with used the research results for policy; 2) the networks the award recipients created provided avenues for policy influence; 3) the awards catalyzed an interest in policy; and, 4) awards can provide the skills necessary for policy influence. Many of the respondents have been directly involved in the policy process in their capacity as NGO staff, government staff, and academics with a strong interest in policy.

The **affiliated institutions** of many award recipients quickly used their research for policy purposes. This provided immediate and tangible evidence of contributions to policy. It also demonstrated the relevance of their research to policy, and opened further opportunities for policy relevant work. This was most often with NGOs and municipalities and this research was

*"While I did have some experience in policy analysis, I have not thought systematically about the policy implications of my work. The grant from IDRC was a major incentive to do so. Since then, a very important part of my work has been aimed at policy formulation, for example with respect to Canadian mining investment in Latin America, or Canadian role in support of human rights in the hemisphere." – Canwin, 1999*

relevant 'on the ground' and within the developing countries in which they were researching. However, some respondents worked with national departments and international organizations. These impacts will be further explored below in section 2.6 Award Recipients' Influence on Institutions.

**Networks for policy influence** were a result of the time spent in the field. The respondents did not necessarily work directly with these contacts, but conversations with others allowed them to disseminate



their research findings with a wide variety of stakeholders. These stakeholders then applied their research to their own policy work.

In some cases the awards **catalyzed an interest in policy**. The respondents noted that they had not thought of the policy implications for their work, and that the awards provided an additional impetus to do so.

The **skills for policy influence** were noted as the contribution of the IDRC award. These skills were facilitated by being involved in policy dialogues and various aspects of the policy process. These included monitoring and evaluation methodologies for policy development, writing policy briefs, and general experience with policy formulation.

*“As a direct result of IDRC funded research I was appointed special advisor on humanitarian issues to the Canadian Government during its tenure on the Security Council (1998-2002). I was invited to contribute further research for the OECD DAC working group on Conflict, Peace, and Development. This led to CIDA seconding me to the DAC to ‘provide intellectual coherence’ to the original Guidelines on Conflict, Peace, and Development Cooperation. This is a great example of how IDRC-supported research found its way directly into the guidelines for bilateral development agencies” – Professional Development Award, 1996*

In general, most of those respondents who noted that the award contributed to their continued work in policy already had an interest in policy formulation, even if it was peripheral to their research area. They have influenced on policy by sharing the results of their research with NGOs and other actors, through their networks in government departments and international governmental organizations, and in some cases by transferring their knowledge of policy to their students. Several individuals have had great influence at the national and international levels, and this will be further explored below.

Six respondents shared further information about why they felt the IDRC award did not contribute to their continued involvement in policy. Several noted that while their work has been used by policy makers, they themselves have not been involved in the policy process. Two others noted that their award gave them the skills to affect policy, but have not yet been in the position to use these or that their policy influence is unrelated to the research funded by the award. Another noted: “While I was not involved in development of policy early in my academic career that has increased in more recent years. IDRC provided me with an interest in policy development but early academic’s career require a focus on research and publication so I was not able to act on that until I became a more established scholar.”

The responses provided provide some insight into how IDRC might increase the policy influence of its award recipients, and these recommendations are below in Section 3.

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*"I'm responsible for leading the organization's strategic direction on gender as well as ensuring that it is mainstreamed in other thematic programs and in the work place. In terms of advocacy I coordinate [the organization's] participation in advocacy at regional and Pan African levels: Regional blocks including ICGLR, ECOWAS, EU, and SADC, Pan African (UNECA) and global level (CSW) to raise the gender related aspects. Given that [the organization's] advocacy engagement is rooted in country program and research work, my core responsibility is to ensure documentation of lessons generated from the programs, providing guidance in identification of research priorities and conducting the studies as well as coordinating processes for policy reviews at regional and Pan African level." –YCRA/IDRA, 2004*

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## 2.6 Award Recipients Influence on Institutions

A key motivation for this study was to better understand the institutional impact of IDRC awards. While only one closed-ended question asked about this, open-ended questions were designed with prompts intended to elicit relevant institutional influences award holders have had. Relevant open-ended responses were categorized by the type of institution (NGO, university, government, and international governmental organizations), and the type of impact (on policy, research agendas, guidelines).

The closed ended question found that 80% of the respondents have initiated or helped lead education or training programs. The open-ended responses found that IDRC award recipients influence many levels of government, civil society organizations, international NGOs, official development assistance, and others by setting or contributing to the research and policy agendas of the institutions they work for or collaborate with. Rarely are their careers not directly related to the work supported by IDRC.

**Influence on NGOs** was most commonly cited among the institutional impacts of award recipients. This was often a direct result of IDRC funded field research, as these were institutions they collaborated with or interviewed. Due to these close ties, the NGOs frequently made use of respondents' research in outreach, policy formulation, setting their advocacy agendas, and training. In addition,

*"My initial research project with SEWA (in 2002) to study gender and property issues in urban India evolved into a range of other projects over the years including projects on gender and water, sanitation, electrification and projects on women in non-traditional occupations (I developed one project on construction workers in collaboration with SEWA and another on female taxi drivers in collaboration with an NGO in New Delhi called Azad Foundation)." – IDRA/YCRA 2002*

several respondents noted that they contributed to the creation of NGOs in the communities they did their work in.

Many respondents have continued to work with the NGOs they met during their field work, or have made connections with other NGOs. Here the relationship to the IDRC supported work is not as clear. Some of these connections were facilitated by the respondents time in the field, while others were thematic and emerged during the post-award period. What is clear is that respondents partially attribute these influences to the IDRC supported research.

Finally, there are those respondents that work, or have worked for NGOs. Typically, these award recipients directly applied the skills and experiences contributed by the IDRC funded research to the projects, programs, and research/policy agendas to the organizations they have worked for. Those who currently work for NGOs are engaged in water and sanitation, gender, community health, and agriculture. Five are program or project managers, and three are directors or senior management, and all but one noted that the IDRC award has made a great contribution to their careers and professional lives.

The influence that award recipients have had on NGOs has raised awareness of their research at municipal and national levels, and beyond as these organizations use research for their own program delivery and advocacy. It also shows how the impact of research goes beyond bibliometrics. While this influence is not easily tracked, it shows the wider impacts of research beyond the academic community. The variety of sectors is also quite staggering, covering subjects such as health, agriculture (including urban and peri-urban agriculture), climate change, women's rights, microfinance, governance, etc. This influence has had impacts on government policy as well, due to civil society influence on government.

*"I represented Africa in the WHO/FAO Codex Alimentarius Expert Committee on microbiological hazards associated with irrigated leafy vegetables, and I am part of the international expert group on water and sanitation of the International Life Science Institutes (ILSI Europe - Global Activity) with a focus on emerging microbiological issues. I represented the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) at the IFAD food fair in Rome and several equally important meetings, and I was recently invited to the international WHO Water Quality Advisory Group which is working on the new editions of all WHO water quality related guidelines." – Agropolis, 2002*

After NGO influence, the next most common institutional references noted work with **government agencies and departments**. As with the influence with NGOs, this influence was often directly related to the IDRC supported research or further research in the same field, and connections were facilitated by the initial award period.

Of government agents and departments, respondents most frequently cited a national influence, followed by influence on municipalities and local communities. This was typically in developing countries, rather than in Canada or countries in the Global North, and was sometimes directly related to their IDRC supported work, but more commonly a result of further work they had conducted in the same academic area.

Many noted that, without providing specific examples, their work has been cited and used by other researchers and policy makers within the developing world. While they did not directly contribute to policy formulation and setting research agendas, they did have an indirect influence on these institutions.

Beyond this indirect influence, many had a direct influence by helping formulate national policies on initiatives related to their own work. For example, several noted that their research has been used to set national level policies on urban agriculture. This facilitated their continued involvement in policy formulation. Other have been involved in new initiatives, such as the National Youth Commission of the

Philippine Government and contributions to the National Commission for Women and Law Ministry (India) to amend Hindu Succession Act and Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act. The IDRC awards help position recipients as experts who are able to affect policy for sustainable development.

Many respondents provided examples of their contributions to development at the local and municipal levels. In some cases this led to direct action: respondents shared their community-relevant findings with stakeholders so they could then plan and lead further activities. In others, they contributed to municipal policy making, most often on agriculture and water and sanitation. The impacts that respondents have had on government were often directly related to the work that was supported by IDRC. However, those who had the profound influence on various levels of government were committed to translating their research to action. They developed strong networks and connections with key individuals or organizations and have maintained these long-standing ties throughout their continuing careers.

The influence of respondents on **international organizations** (including international NGOs, international financial institutions, and United Nations agencies) is most often at the policy level. This is unsurprising given the type of work that these organizations do. In addition to noting international recognition and bibliometrics, 14 respondents provided specific examples of their work with international organizations (IOs).

The in-depth responses noted participation in UN roundtables, research for UN agencies and other IOs that influenced future policy directions and programming, and presentations to IFIs (such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank). There was also indirect influence (such as the research being used as a source for United Nations Convention Against Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Experts Committee). One respondent noted that his work with Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment has had a great deal of influence on both academic and practical understandings of conflict zones. This work led to projects and programs at IDRC, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Institute for Development Studies, the OECD Development Co-operation, and the European Union.

*“The Agropolis award facilitated my proposal writing skills and receiving the award itself made me competitive for other grants/awards received to date (e.g. NSF, SSHRC, Humboldt). It also provided an opportunity to develop further my research and writing skills, which in turn have helped me establish a research program focused on international development issues within a University setting.” – Agropolis, 2001*

The findings indicate that IDRC award recipients are well positioned to have a great deal of influence on international institutions. These impacts are often directly related to the IDRC supported research, and are facilitated by the networks and connections the award recipients create during their research period. Those who had a great deal of influence on international institutions had an indicated a prior interest in policy, and were often well positioned due to the timing of their awards to have a significant impact on the policy and programs of these organizations.

**Influence on academic institutions** was also widely noted within the responses to open-ended questions. Many respondents touched on how their work has been used to set research agendas and priorities within both their own organization and within other academic institutions. Additionally, many respondents are heads of departments, research units, and other academic institutions. Direct institutional influence related to the IDRC funded research was less often noted, but those that did explained that they were responsible for new research agendas, new departments or units, and for coordinating research. Five recipients noted that they have been instrumental in establishing new academic units or degree programs, and four are research coordinators at academic institutions. All of these noted that the IDRC funded research was the foundation on which these units were based, and the IDRC award often provided the skills to help establish these initiatives.

### 3. Key Findings and Recommendations

#### 3.1 Up-to-date Contact Information

Contact information is difficult to keep current. Award recipients tend not to proactively share up-dated contact information with IDRC when they finish university, change jobs, or move. As a result scholarship programs should not rely on institutional email addresses for tracer studies. Future recipients should be asked to provide a permanent email address not affiliated with their institutions, either prior to or after their award tenure. This may help increase the number of award responses and decrease the number of rejected emails.

An alumni association may also help keep award recipients actively engaged with one another and IDRC. Depending on its form (an email listserve, a FaceBook group, or LinkedIn accounts, etc.) this may help ensure IDRC staff have ready access to contact information, at least with those who are members. This does not eliminate the element of coverage bias discussed in Section 1.8: Limitations, but may help reach a greater number of award recipients and mitigate it.

In the absence of the aforementioned measures and perhaps even in spite of them, web searches for awardees may have to continue. This is a significant effort, but important to ensure that IDRC has current information on its award recipients, to be aware of their current work, and to alert them of opportunities for funding, either through IDRC or other organizations.

#### 3.2 Theory of Change

The theory of change was validated. We can state that based on the responses, IDRC awards do contribute to outputs (including financial support, comments on PhD work, final reports, and theses). While it cannot be stated conclusively, the respondents indicate that IDRC is targeting the supporting students working in important areas related sustainable development.

Respondents indicated that IDRC fellowships and awards do contribute greatly to immediate outcomes such as faster PhD completion, greater rates of PhD completion, enhanced research skills, personal growth and an international outlook, as well as supporting important individual capacity building. The awards do provide 'hands-on' field research experience, and connect students with appropriate institutions.

In regards to intermediate outcomes – career advancements, publications, choice of work, and building new knowledge and skills – IDRC can claim a great contribution to the careers of award recipients. Responses noted that the IDRC awards and scholarships are highly regarded within the development community and, in the eyes of recipients, enhance their CVs significantly. Recipients do go on to publish their research and share it with others, and are exposed to new methodologies and research techniques. Even if recipients change their fields, the knowledge and skills they gain as part of the IDRC supported research are transferable and applicable in other fields.

The ultimate outcomes of the theory of change for the awards – that award recipients contribute to research and policy, the development community, and influence the institutions that they work for - were also confirmed. Award recipients do achieve positions of influence, typically in academia, but also in other areas such as governments, non-governmental organizations, and research institutions. They do tend to network with colleagues and stay connected with the various stakeholders in the field research. The award outputs are used by others to influence policy and research, but the award recipients use these as foundations for their future careers and research.

This said, only 37% of respondents noted that the IDRC award or fellowship contributed to their continued involvement in policy, while 88% noted that the award or fellowship contributed to their continued involvement in research. The program might consider ways of contributing more significantly to this aspect of this outcome, and this aspects of recipients' careers

### 3.3 Policy influence

An outcome area IDRC might consider targeting is policy influence. Only 37% of the respondents noted that the award or fellowship had contributed to their continued involvement in policy. It seems like that this may be due to the complexities of the research to policy process. However, another factor mentioned several times is that most award recipients are completing their PhDs, and this requires a focus on publishing in peer-reviewed academic journals. IDRC might consider incorporating strategies to enhance the policy influence of awardees during its period of direct influence. This period, which encompasses the application stage to the submission of the final report, is a critical time period for IDRC to achieve its ultimate outcomes.

Two specific changes might enhance IDRC's contributions to policy directions and debates. A question might be incorporated into the application form that asks award recipients to explain the potential policy impacts of their research, institutions that might be interested in this, and how they intend to influence policy. This could be a ranked question or not, but will ensure that award applicants and recipients consider the potential policy influence of their work. The second change could be a similar question when they submit final report forms after completing their field work. This may motivate them to re-consider the policy impacts of their IDRC supported work, and potentially reach out to various stakeholders.

Both these changes could be supported by existing IDRC tools and training available through the communications department. Two documents in particular may be of use: 1) "How to Write a Policy Brief"; and, 2) "Policy Brief Template." Depending on staff time, award recipients could also be asked to provide a policy brief for their work, and these could be hosted and uploaded to IDRC's website or to the IDRC Digital Library. This might provide a summary of the supported work and demonstrate its relevance to Canadian Government priorities and other interested stakeholders.

### 3.4 Award Recipient Networks

The previous sections have noted the importance of networks to maintain current contact information, and the importance of networking during the award tenure. Relationships formed during this time increase the possibility of award recipient's policy and research contributions. More than anything else, the networks developed during the award period were critical to their continued success. Respondents noted that they would like greater contact with IDRC staff after they have finished their PhD research and with other award recipients. These relationships, with one another and IDRC staff, could be enhanced by an IDRC created, and potentially managed, post-award period network.

Many respondents noted that an "alumni" network would contribute to their current work. Current award recipients would have access to experts, while former award recipients would have information on current research projects. This could enable access to experts on thematic or regional issues, increase dissemination, and contribute to relationship-building. This might also enable former award recipients to set up high-level mentorship programs for grad students, post-docs, and early-career research professionals who work in international development. IDRC might also consider creating a list of current Canada Research Chairs (CRC) that were award holders. This might be helpful for planning collaborative research projects and organizing CRC-IDRC panels at conferences. As CRCs are recognized experts in research excellence, this might also aid IDRC in demonstrating the impact of awards.

An "alumni" network could take a number of forms:

1. a social media platform to connect current and former award recipients;
2. an email listserve; or,
3. an IDRC developed platform with specialized capabilities;

The form of the network would require detailed planning to take into account the current and future capacities of Fellowships and Awards staff, the planned activities of the network, and the extent to which IDRC staff plan to manage or support these. Given that such a network could help maintain current contact information, increase the dissemination of IDRC supported work, and help award recipients contribute to research and policy, it is recommended that such a network be implemented. Furthermore, as there is an appetite for such a network, it would likely be well-received and often used by award recipients.



## Annex 1: Awards Traced

The **Young Canadian Researchers Awards** (YCRA) were established in 1982 to assist Canadian graduate students to undertake their thesis research on issues related to international development. The awards were intended to promote the growth of Canadian capacity in research on sustainable and equitable development on areas corresponding to IDRC's research priorities. Normally, the research was to be conducted in Latin America, Africa, or Asia. Applicants had to be registered at a Canadian university, hold Canadian citizenship or permanent residency status, and the proposed research had to be for a doctoral or a Master's thesis. This competition was restricted to doctoral students in October 1996 and the YCRAs were offered for the last time in March 1997.

The **IDRC Doctoral Research Awards** (IDRA) were offered for the first time in December 1997 to replace the YCRA program. They are open to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada and since November 2004, they have been open to developing country nationals studying in Canada. These awards are intended to promote the growth of Canadian capacity in research on sustainable and equitable development from an international perspective. The awards cover the cost of justifiable field research expenses in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, or Asia for a period of 3–12 months.

The **Canadian Window on International Development Awards** (CanWin) were offered for the first time in June 1997 to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada for doctoral field research on the link between Canada's policy on foreign affairs and a current and pressing domestic problem. In 2002, a second type of award was granted for doctoral or Master's research into a problem that is common to First Nations or Inuit communities in Canada and a developing region of the world. Proposals must include comparative research in Canada and a developing region of the world to better understand a common, interrelated problem or issue identified for in-depth study. In April 2005, these awards were opened to developing country nationals studying in Canada.

**Internship Awards** are granted to both Canadians and developing country nationals. Award holders divide their time between undertaking individual research and being trained in the techniques of research management through hands-on work experience with their chosen program's programming and practices. They work under the mentorship of a Program Officer. Internships last between 4 and 12 months and are tenable at IDRC headquarters in Ottawa or in a Regional Office. As of 2011, they are known as **Research Awards**.

**Professional Development Awards** (PDA) provide individuals (both Canadians and developing country nationals) an opportunity to develop expertise in a particular professional capacity by working with IDRC staff on program management and research issues. These award holders have had several years of work experience and are therefore able to share their knowledge and skills with IDRC program staff while honing their expertise and widening their own experiences. In the past, very senior level researchers have held PDAs. The program has evolved over time to include award holders at a more junior level.

The **AGROPOLIS: International Graduate Research Awards in Urban Agriculture Awards** (Agropolis), funded by the Urban Poverty and Environment (UPE) Program Initiative were offered for the first time in 1999. They supported innovative graduate-level field research in the area of urban agriculture. Proposed research was designed and implemented jointly with international, national, or local research users. Two-thirds of the awards were granted to applicants who had citizenship or permanent resident status in a developing country; the other third were granted to citizens or permanent residents of Canada. Agropolis also supported postdoctoral awards for those who had graduated within the past 5 years. These awards were offered for the last time in 2005.

The **Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health Graduate Awards** (Ecohealth), funded by the Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health Program Initiative, were established in 1997 to assist Master's or doctoral students undertaking fieldwork on ecosystem management. They were intended to encourage promising graduate students achieve a more holistic understanding of the relationships between environment, health and development. These were available to Canadian and developing country graduate students and covered the costs of up to one year of field research. These awards were offered for the last time in 2007.

Since 1983 IDRC has supported awards for international journalism: one based with the Gemini News Service in London, England, and one based with L'Agence Periscope in Montpellier, France. In 2002 these were replaced by **Awards for International Development Journalism**, managed by five Canadian institutions (currently the University of British Columbia, Carleton University, Concordia University, Université Laval and the University of Western Ontario). Awards are granted to full-time graduate students who are currently enrolled in, or are graduates from the preceding academic year of a Master of Arts in Journalism program, or Graduate Diploma in Journalism, and are based on good academic achievement. These awards are open to Canadians and permanent residents of Canada only. The award recipients spend approximately 4-10 months in a developing country to enhance their knowledge of international development and international reporting issues.

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