Capacity Building at IDRC

Results and factors supporting results

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Executive Summary

The core mission of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is **Empowerment through Knowledge**. Towards this end, the organization has adopted as one of its strategic goals to "strengthen and help mobilize the local research capacity of developing countries."

This objective sounds straightforward enough. The term "capacity building" (along with related concepts like "capacity development" and "capacity enhancement") has been familiar to the development community for decades. But what exactly does it mean? Some definitions of capacity building can sound faintly tautological, for example, "fostering an ability that was missing before," or "leading to the development of a research environment capable of engaging in research and renewing the ability to carry on." The problem of simple definition provides a hint of the richness and complexity of the issue. Is capacity building, for instance, a process leading to development, or is it a result or even a component of that development – in other words, is it a means or an end? Are the abilities being nurtured those of individuals, or of the institutions that these people belong to, such as NGOs, universities, research centres, and networks? Exactly which capacities are being built? Is it the ability to carry out and analyze basic research? Or is it also the ability to administer a project, liaise with professional networks, donors, and policy-makers, or communicate results to the public?

In an effort to provide IDRC's own staff and managers with an intellectual framework and a useful common language to help harness the concept, the organization's Evaluation Unit (EU) has set out to answer these questions. Assisted by the consultant Universalia, the EU has been conducting a comprehensive strategic evaluation of capacity building within IDRC. This document represents the findings of Phase two of a three phase strategic evaluation on IDRC's efforts in capacity building. So far, the core elements of the evaluation have been these: interviewing staff members and management to lay the ground for a conceptual framework expressing IDRC's collective notion of capacity building; examining the pattern of IDRC's funding practices in light of these findings; and looking closely at the actual results of a sample of IDRC-supported projects. A further stage, to come, will explore case studies in order to ground the evaluation in specific, detailed experiences.

To put it more simply, the aim of the study has been to clarify what IDRC actually means by "building capacity," then looks back at the organization's real work to measure whether – in its own terms – it has succeeded in doing so.

Capacity Building at IDRC

For IDRC staff, capacity building is an essential variable in their approach to development. With a focus on process and on learning-by-doing, and especially on sustaining long-term personal relationships, IDRC is fixed on the value of the individual partner as the key component in capacity building.

IDRC's approach to capacity building was found to be normally instrumental or functional in nature, and focused on tangibles, such as professional competencies, capabilities, and the tools needed to conduct research. These skills included the ability to identify research problems, to design and implement projects, to monitor and evaluate, to achieve good financial management, to link with other researchers and with donors, to publicize results, and so on. For IDRC therefore, capacity building means working with partners to conduct better research in a specific field and that any change that occurs as a result of this capacity building is at the problem or research area level, rather than at the institutional or systems level.

Approaches to Capacity Building

Although staff and managers identified many different activities used to build capacity, no specific process – or "activity mix" – was identified that would suggest a formal approach. The standard capacity building toolbox includes small grants funding, training courses, exchanges and visits, conferences and workshops, professional networks, and so on. However, despite the rich store of such tools, few respondents mentioned a process of mixing and matching them into any sort of calculated approach.

By far the most significant of factor in building capacity was IDRC's persistence and flexibility, particularly when IDRC is contrasted with other donor organizations. Interviewees cited IDRC's patience with projects and recipients, and its willingness to make prolonged commitments as being a key component of IDRC's operation. Interviewees pointed also to IDRC's agility in shifting programs and budgets in reaction to new ideas on the ground. Many felt that IDRC's responsiveness is a direct result of its willingness to take chances.

Other success factors were found to be IDRC's enthusiasm for research networks; the wide, multidisciplinary range of expertise that IDRC makes available to its partners, much of which is a result of the organization's support for mutual learning; IDRC's provision of support beyond the level of one-off training sessions; and IDRC's status as a Crown Corporation, which gives it more freedom and flexibility in the way it operates.

The Results of IDRC's Capacity Building

In order to ground the concepts and issues in empirical data, this phase of the strategic evaluation examined a carefully-selected sample of 43 projects. Project documents, plus in-depth interviews with IDRC managers and project staff provided most of the information on what IDRC had achieved in terms of capacity building. The first phase of the evaluation looked at the broad mix of activities that IDRC applies whenever it aims to build capacity. When project results were examined in this phase of the evaluation, such a wide assortment of specific outcomes was found to be associated with this mix of activities that it is difficult to arrive at any useful classification. To put it another way, IDRC attempts to build capacity by so many different means, and achieves so many different kinds of results, it remains a challenge to isolate what is really important.

A valuable by-product of this evaluation process of examining selected projects, was the inclusion of research partners' thoughts about IDRC's capacity building efforts. For the most part, interviewees defined "research capacity building" as changes in individual behaviour as well as the cultivation of individual, group, organizational, and inter-organizational relationships. One project, for example, illustrated both types of outcome: it helped individual women develop more self-confidence in decision making, but at the same time this new skill led to changes in the relationships between these women and service institutions such as banks and clinics.

In line with earlier findings, it was again confirmed by interviewees that the entry point for IDRC-supported capacity building efforts most often centered on the changing of individual behaviours. Despite this bias toward the individual, however, a significant number of IDRC staff interviewed also wished to focus at an institutional and organizational level. Often, this meant the application of a "trickle up" theory, where support for individuals then stimulated a transformation within the institution. As projects moved forward, behavioural change in individuals often "multiplied" to foster changes within institutions. Typically, this multiplier effect happened by way of trainers who were tasked with building the capacity of others, or by way of newly-created networks.

One surprising finding is that there was more focus on the local partners of IDRC direct partners than was expected, which means that identifying the outcomes of IDRC's capacity building requires researching further down the chain of results. IDRC's direct partners – those organizations that receive the funding and carry out the research – reported that most of the capacity building efforts, and therefore the

outcomes, actually take place between them and their grassroots collaborators. This discovery has important implications for IDRC's reporting procedures. Should the focus continue to be on IDRC's direct partners – or on its partners' partners?

Why IDRC Works

IDRC-supported projects have made important contributions to international development. These successes are due to IDRC's *processes* for capacity building, its role as a *legitimating agency* for research and development, and its use of *peer learning*.

For both IDRC personnel and IDRC's partners, capacity building is seen as being about developing a relationship that engages partners in solving key challenges. Partners appreciate the competence and personal approach of IDRC staff coupled with the importance of IDRC support to their own personal reputations and to those of the groups with whom they work.

List of main findings:

1. The four most frequently reported outputs were: 1) researchers trained, 2) development of training materials, 3) research dissemination (e.g. papers, conferences) and 4) the development of databases.

2. It was rare that interviewees talked about development results as part of our capacity building conversation. For the most part, people interviewed spoke of 'research capacity building' as changing individual behavior as well as a wide assortment of individual, group, and organizational and inter-organizational relationships.

3. Changing individual behavior was the most often identified entry point for IDRC-supported capacity building efforts. This is consistent with Phase I findings. As projects progressed, individual behavioural change often supported multipliers and institutional changes.

4. While the outcomes of IDRC projects are context specific, they can be categorized in terms of their target of change or outcome areas.   These categories include change at individual, organizational, network, state/institutional, and societal (users of research) levels.

5. There is a wide assortment of outcomes associated with the different interventions used by IDRC. Categorizing them underscores the complexity of reporting on outcome results at the agency level.

6. There was more focus on the boundary partners of IDRC partners than expected. Identifying outcomes of IDRC's capacity building requires researching further down the chain of results.

7. High profile, highly educated researchers and/or consultants were frequently the partner in our sample. Some have been receiving funds from IDRC for more than 20 years.

8. IDRC's process for capacity building is consistent with the OECD's Principles and Best Practices for Capacity Development (2003).

9. For both IDRC staff/managers and their partners, capacity building is seen as being more than just a technical fix: it is about developing a relationship that engages partners in solving key challenges. Partners like the competence of IDRC staff coupled with their personalized approach.

10. Funding and support from IDRC helps to create windows of opportunity for researchers who might not otherwise have the time, money or space to carry out the research.

11. Partners interviewed valued the importance of IDRC support to their own personal reputation and that of the groups they work with.

12. Interviewees identify knowing a potential partner as an important component of the IDRC capacity building selection process. This helps the "management of legitimacy".

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13. Project partners support the peer learning approach in contrast to the frequently-used expert-driven model. IDRC partners tend to replicate this model in their own South-South partnerships

Acronyms

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
AERC	African Economic Research Consortium
AFNS	Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Sciences
CAF	Corporate Assessment Framework
CFP	Cities Feeding People
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSPF	Corporate Strategy and Program Framework
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ENRM	Environment and Natural Resource Management
ESARO	Eastern and Southern African Regional Office
FAC	Foreign Affairs Canada
FY	Fiscal Year
GAD	Grant Administration Division
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
ISNAR	International Service for National Agricultural Research
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IXP	Internet Exchange Point
KPFE	Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PI	Program Initiative
PO	Program Officer
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper(s)
RBM	Results Based Management

RMAF	Results Based Management and Accountability Frameworks
SEP	Social and Economic Policy
SISERA	Secretariat for Institutional Support for Economic Research in Africa
SMC	Senior Management Committee
SWAp	Sector Wide Approaches
TOR	Terms of Reference
UA	Urban Agriculture
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office

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1. Introduction

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) supports the development of indigenous research capacity to enable developing countries to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies. Research generates knowledge and the use of research empowers people to engage in more sustainable development. To this end, the Centre builds local capacity to solve critical development problems.

IDRC brings together the creativity and power of knowledge, with those who are the users of knowledge. 'Empowerment through Knowledge' expresses the conviction that the development of indigenous research capacity is a cornerstone for the progress of nations, peoples, institutions, organizations, communities, and individuals.

In 2004, IDRC initiated a strategic evaluation[1] to gain a deeper understanding of how the Centre operationalizes its support for capacity building. The first phase (Lusthaus and Neilson 2005) addressed:

1) What the Centre says it is doing (as manifested in the existing background documentation and interview data);

2) What the Centre is actually doing (as manifested in the "intent" Documentation);

3) To develop a typology and/or a (number of) framework(s) that provide(s) a picture of the types and levels (i.e., individual, organizational, systems/societal) of capacities that IDRC supports;

4) To create a common language and understanding that will help Centre staff and managers (both senior and otherwise) to better articulate what they do, who they do it with, and how they do it in relation to capacity building activities;

5) To contextualize IDRC's work by describing what other development agencies/organizations are doing in relation to capacity building activities;

6) To establish the conceptual groundwork for **Phase II**, which will report on the results of IDRC's contribution to capacity building in developing countries.

The first phase synthesized several background studies commissioned by the Evaluation Unit and placed IDRC's approach to capacity building within the wider context of what other organizations were doing. Findings from this phase suggested that the Centre uses a broad

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[1] This study is considered to be a "strategic evaluation" since it is looking at a Centre-wide issue (capacity building) that affects all programs in all regions. The information from this study is also intended to inform senior management in their decision-making regarding the monitoring of "local capacity building" as a developmental result as stated in the Corporate Assessment Framework (CAF).

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conception of capacity building and invests more in building the capacity of individuals than organizations or institutions. CB efforts were guided by the core values of local ownership, flexibility, and respect for diversity. Research capacity building efforts were found to be concentrated on a "problematique or specific field" of research.

This report, representing the culmination of the second phase, examines the results achieved by IDRC interventions in a sample of projects, identifies what has worked in developing research capacities (and what hasn't), and sets out key gaps and deficiencies for consideration. Fundamental to this phase was an extensive review carried out with staff and partners of selected IDRC-supported research and research support projects. The third phase is intended to explore case studies to ground the study in specific, in-depth experiences.

For all three phases, what is learned from this evaluation is intended for use by:

- IDRC senior managers, in their monitoring of indigenous capacity building as part of the Centre's Corporate Assessment Framework (CAF) reporting and in supporting a corporate environment conducive to the Centre's capacity building efforts,

- IDRC staff and managers, in designing, supporting and monitoring projects and activities intended to build capacities. IDRC assumes and supports an explicit relationship between knowledge and its use in solving development problems.

2. Methodology

The methodology for this phase of the study consisted of two primary sources of data: documents and people. The design of the methodology used was a collaborative effort between the consultants and the Evaluation Unit. It builds on the previous phase and is intended to help present the results of IDRC's contributions to research capacities in the South and to link these results to practices that seem to work. This was a desk and interview research study. No fieldwork was done.

An important aspect of this phase was the use of specific projects to help ground the concepts and issues in empirical data[2]. As part of this, and a subsequent strength, was the inclusion of the partners' voices from the sampled projects in order to capture partners' thoughts and perspectives on how IDRC supports capacity building for research for development.

2.1 Project Sampling

A central question in this phase was to better understand the results IDRC was getting from its capacity building efforts. Since the

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[2] The first phase used documents and interviews to understand the way CB was used in IDRC.

potential number of projects in the population was very high[3] the study
adopted a purposeful sample approach.

The sample strategy involved asking IDRC staff/managers to recommend
CB projects that were indicative of the kinds of capacity building
activities and/or projects that IDRC supports. No definition was
given and IDRC staff/managers[4] interpreted the request themselves. Two
other central features of project selection were: 1) to include cases
where the potential for learning was considered significant by staff,
and 2) to include cases considered to be either successful or
unsuccessful by staff in order to distil lessons. We asked people to
select "data-rich" projects well suited to informing the study. "Data
rich" cases meant information was readily available from the files
(e.g. project technical reports, monitoring/trip reports, PCRs,
evaluation reports).

The following summarizes the results of our sample:

1) Research projects recommended by program staff/managers to the
   consultants during interviews carried out in the previous phase
   of this study or research projects purposively identified by
   Team Leaders and/or Directors of Program Areas to ensure
   program/regional coverage (n=22)

2) Research projects falling within the 26 percent "capacity" sub-
   type (n=146) and had completed PCRs (n=5)

3) Research support projects recommended to us by each of the Team
   Leaders (n=10)

4) Research projects or research support projects identified by
   units/divisions that: 1) do not have regular project funding
   (e.g., PBDD); 2) are not part of the Programs and Partnership
   Branch (e.g., Evaluation Unit); or 3) are smaller units within
   larger units but do fund projects regularly (e.g., Gender Unit,
   Middle East Initiatives) (n=3)

5) Research projects suggested by the partners during exchanges
   regarding interviews (n=3)

The selection process led to a sample size of 43 projects.

2.2 Description of the Sample

The project sample consisted of 32 research projects, 10 research
support projects, and 1 Secretariat Project. The following table
describes the sample of projects by program area and region.

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[3] The total population of projects approved between April 2000 and September
2004 included approximately 500 research projects and 1000 research support
projects.

[4] See Appendix 2 for a list of projects included in the sample.

Exhibit 2.1   Number of Selected Projects[5] by Program Area and Region

	ENRM	SEP	ICT4D	TOTAL
LACRO	5	0	0	5
SARO	2	1	4	6
ESARO	3	2	1	6
ASRO	6	2	4	11
MERO	1	1	0	2
WARO	0	1	1	2
Global	6	3	0	9
Total	23	10	10	43

Within the sample, three projects were selected from the following non-programming units: 1) Partnership and Business Development Division (ASRO), 2) Evaluation Unit (LACRO), and 3) Special Initiatives Division, Middle East Unit (MERO).

Of the total 32[6] research projects, half (n=16) are classified as "capacity" sub-type within the Centre's administrative project management system. This illustrates coding issues for CB projects within the IDRC project system. The 32 research projects selected represent a little more than $18M in IDRC funding (with the amount of funding to projects ranging from $67,000 to $2.7M). The average amount of funding for each research project was a little less than $567,000.

Exhibit 2.2   Research Projects by Project Sub-Type
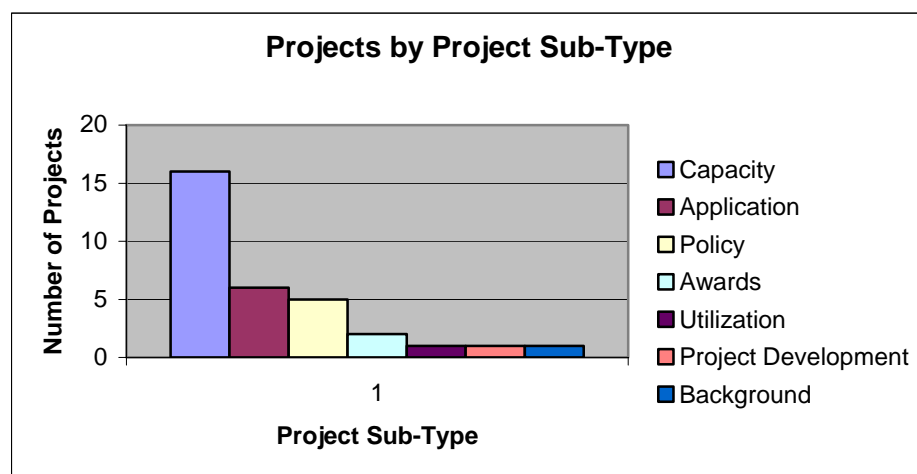

The total amount of funding for "capacity" projects was $9.5M and the average amount for each project was $590,000. The average amount for each "capacity" project was quite high, compared to the other

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[5] This includes both research and research support projects.

[6] This total does not include EEPSEA, which is a Secretariat Project, and is classified as a "Secretariat".

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projects: the average amount for "policy" projects was $486,000, while the average amount for "application" projects was a little less than $400,000.

Exhibit 2.3   Average Amount of Funding to Each Sub-Type of Project in Sample

Average Amount of Funding to Each Sub-Type in Sample
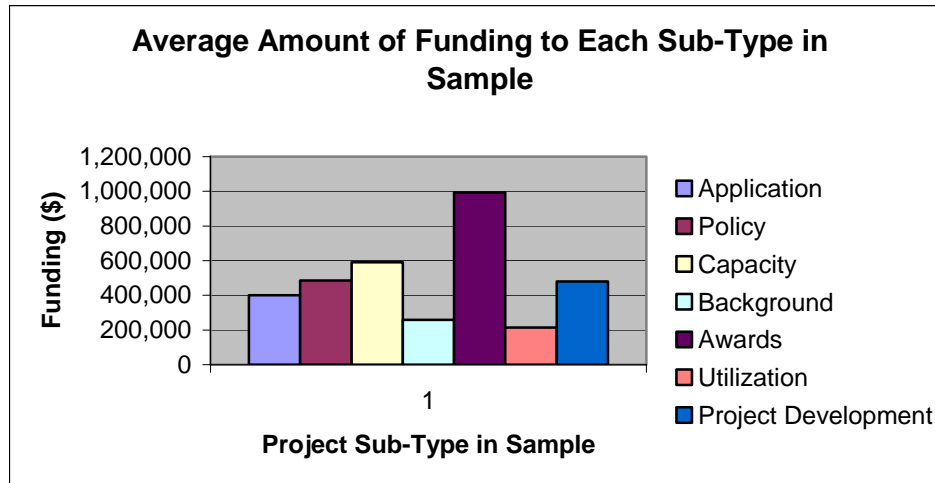
The two "awards" projects represent the highest average funding per project. However, both projects (003754, 100824) were for the Agropolis Awards. The first of these awards projects provided funds for up to 28 researchers.

On the other hand, the sidebar provides an example of what can be achieved with a relatively small investment. In this case, IDRC's investment contributed towards a PhD degree in community-based natural resource management for a student in the Caribbean, thus

> **How do you best use money for capacity building in the South? A partner's response to the use of $67,000:**
>
> *"Providing money for a developing country student is a very effective method. They know how to interact with the locals, but at the same time we're also building their capacity to do good research. I think supporting a PhD student is very effective. If length of time is a concern for IDRC, then you could use this model: fund a student for three years, and then see if the professor at the partner university can pick up the rest".*

contributing not only to building a critical mass of researchers in this field of study, but also to the generation of new knowledge in this area.

2.3 Information Collection

Project documents, project staff and IDRC managers were the primary sources of data for exploring the results and issues associated with the 43 projects. A qualitative approach was used in this phase of the study to analyze the interviews and documents in this report. Interview questions for IDRC project staff and IDRC partners were developed as a result of the consultants' and IDRC's experience in Phase I. The protocol is found in Appendix 1.

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Interviews were conducted with both IDRC program staff/managers and senior managers, as well as with IDRC partners. For partners located in areas where telephone interviews were not easily conducted (e.g., Nagaland, India), the interview questions were sent via electronic mail and the partners supplied written responses.

Nearly 70 interviews (n=68) were conducted with IDRC program staff/managers, senior managers, IDRC partners, and training/workshop participants located in the various regions where IDRC works[7]. On average, the interviews lasted for approximately 45mins and, for those located outside of the Ottawa region, were conducted by telephone. The interviews were guided by a series of semi-structured questions that were adapted depending on who the interviewee was and what their relationship to the project was.

In addition to the interviews, the consultants supplemented the data collection with a review of the files of the targeted projects. This provided the necessary contextual understanding of each project, identified stated objectives (intent to build capacity) and planned results (outputs, outcomes) of the project, and acted as a source of data triangulation.

Each file was reviewed to extract the following information, if and where available:

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT NUMBER	RP/RSP	REGION	STATUS	AMOUNT ($)	PROJECT AIMS	EXPECTED PROJECT RESULTS	ACTUAL PROJECT RESULTS

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[7] See Appendix 3 for a list of IDRC staff interviews and Appendix 4 for a list of partners interviewed.

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In a very few cases, some of the file information was not available in Ottawa since the main/primary file was located in the appropriate regional office. However, in these cases, steps were taken to find suitable alternative sources of information (e.g., from the responsible officer, from the partner) in order to mitigate the difficulty of obtaining materials from the files.

An important component of this study is the development of a framework that could assist IDRC program staff and managers to better articulate the *results* of their capacity building efforts. To date, there is very little in the literature on established or acceptable ways to measure capacity building results (see sidebar).

> The GEF is involved in a major attempt to classify results of their capacity building work. This conceptual exercise has identified over 300 potential result areas.
>
> Much of the experience in the evaluation of the effectiveness of capacity building interventions is relatively recent. As a result, methodological frameworks and tools are still evolving, thus reflecting the complexity of capacity building processes, the challenging task of measuring impact and linking capacity interventions, with change and performance (The African Capacity Building Foundation).
>
> The loosely formulated definitions of capacity development are useful for apprehending the process as a complex one, but they leave us in the dark in terms of how to assess achievements of capacity development (UNICEF).

We discuss the value and usefulness of developing a framework in the last section of this paper and identify one possible option. Even though we present a framework to show how such a tool might work, the size and complexity of frameworks to capture the results of CB work often works against their use in practice (see section 6). This is an area that requires continued discussion.

2.4 Limitations of the Methodology

The major limitation of the study was that there is not consistent and reliable data within the IDRC's project reporting system. This makes it difficult to do any systematic analysis[8] across projects.

Several projects that were initially selected for the sample were not included because key staff and/or partners were not able to participate due to travel, workload and/or conflicting commitments. Consequently, several projects had to be substituted and several of these were replaced near the end of the study, resulting in less than satisfactory follow-up time. Projects that were removed from the initial sample were discussed with the Evaluation Unit officer, and other affected staff (e.g. the appropriate DPA).

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[8] In our first phase, managers were interested in looking at trend analysis. Such an analysis requires consistent and reliable information over time. The files reviewed did not have such data.

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Although we tried to take steps to reduce a bias toward over-representing successful projects, our safeguards were not effective. As we reviewed the projects finally selected, it is clear that IDRC's POs' perceived most of the projects in our sample as being successful. Without a prior categorization or typology of projects we were not able to stratify the sample, which also explains why in turn the results do not illustrate less successful projects.

Finally, while the project sample provided a wide range of approaches, focusing on specific approaches to capacity building (e.g. small grants projects, networking projects, Centre of Excellence projects), the diversity of the sample resulted in a limitation of having enough "types of CB projects" to develop deeper insights into the effectiveness of particular types of approaches or interventions.

3. Results Achieved

Leading researchers and development theorists agree that research and development activities are central to a country's economy, environment, and social programs. The phrase "research capacity building" is used within the international community to capture a wide assortment of activities. Results attributable to IDRC capacity building efforts were identified as short-term development *outputs* directly derived from project activities or medium-term *outcomes* that change the actions, behaviors and relationships of project partners.

3.1 Outputs

Outputs from research projects include databases, research papers, or other publications that can be used by a variety of actors (e.g. researchers, development practitioners, policy makers, donors) as a source of evidence to support new policies and new technologies that improve the quality of life for people in developing countries. Training materials and other curricula provide people in the South with the knowledge and resources that can assist them to employ their own training courses.

Sample data taken from the files, interviews, and in some cases PCRs (where applicable and/or available), suggest a wide range of outputs from IDRC-supported capacity building activities. While these types of outputs are reported, we stress that other outputs might not be part of the reporting system. The table below summarizes the types of outputs generated by the projects selected for sampling.

Exhibit 3.1   Type of Outputs Produced

Type of output	Number produced from projects
Articles for local/community consumption	1
Data and data entry systems	6
Research papers	10
Journal articles	3
Policy briefs	3

TYPE OF OUTPUT	NUMBER PRODUCED FROM PROJECTS
Books or book chapters	4
Presentations at conferences	7
Theses	3
People trained in research approaches/tools	10
Information and technology infrastructure (incl. software) – development and/or training in	1
Infrastructure development (equipment/staff)	3
Revised proposals (based on training received)	2
Training materials/curriculum for training courses	4
People who can facilitate/moderate training courses	2
Websites or web-based learning tools	3
Formal study visits/exchanges	2
Workshops	3
Organizational guidelines	1
Groups formed because of research	1

Finding 1: **The four most frequently reported outputs were: 1) researchers trained, 2) development of training materials, 3) research dissemination (e.g. papers, conferences) and 4) the development of databases.**

Our sample indicated that, frequently, the more immediate or short-term results from capacity building activities are trained people. The data reveals that 32 percent of the outputs from the research projects related to the training of people in research/evaluation approaches and tools. Most of these projects trained individuals to use a particular research/evaluation tool or approach. For example, 32 researchers in Mongolia were trained in participatory research approaches for pasture management and in participatory monitoring and evaluation (100875). In another case, researchers/consultants were trained in Outcome Mapping in Latin America, both to use in their own projects and to train others (102267).

Training materials and curriculum were produced in 13 percent of research projects. Many of these projects also contributed by assisting partners and/or beneficiaries to train others (e.g. 102267). In some cases, IDRC staff produced the content for the training materials or posted training materials on public websites for people to access.

IDRC recognizes the importance of communicating and disseminating research findings and results and supports and encourages information sharing by its partners. Communication instruments can include peer-reviewed journals, articles for local community consumption, books, book chapters, and policy briefs. Of the research projects, 29 percent produced research papers and a further 23 percent of IDRC's partners or beneficiaries also presented at conferences. Several of the training projects included a component for participants to present a paper on an issue at a conference held after the training course was

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completed. Only one project partner explicitly stated that the publications they were working on were for public consumption (101595): "We need to write information for local people, so we need to write the articles in the local language. There are five articles currently being finalized for this purpose".

Eighteen percent of the projects in our sample explicitly identified the production of data, databases, and/or data entry systems as outputs. Young researchers and members of women's community organizations were trained to collect, organize, and input data into computer systems. In some cases, trainees also learned how to analyze data. Data produced was used as evidence in developing and implementing a health insurance scheme.

Only two projects in our sample (101759, 101090) had the explicit intent for workshop participants to revise proposals based on the training they received. Having said that, however, file reviews suggest that this iterative process, or the back and forth of the proposal between the partners and the IDRC team/PO to develop a strong proposal that meets both the program requirements as well as being academically sound, is a common practice during the project development stage.

3.2 Outcomes and Development Changes

Capacity building is a central tool for development organizations. Most important development work today uses capacity building as a central strategy. Most of IDRC's projects are focused on improving "research capacity" in their various boundary partners. Improving "research capacity" involves boundary partners changing their behavior—changes which are deemed to be "capacity changes". These are both internal behaviors as well as changes in relationships between and among partners (e.g. individuals, groups, organizations, networks, etc.). These individual and relational behavior changes are called outcomes. In this section, we have attempted to explore the way IDRC projects, reports, and staff identify and articulate these outcome changes.

In addition to searching for outcomes (i.e. direct behavior changes), we were also looking for examples of development changes. For example, if IDRC is working with health researchers in order to improve their research methodology skills, IDRC is also interested in whether the skill improvements are associated with improved health (a development result).

It should be noted that there is ongoing debate in the capacity building field with respect to what should be measured when evaluating CB. Some argue that capacity building is a means toward development results. In this perspective, it is critical to explore both the outcomes and developmental consequences. From another perspective, CB experts argue that capacity building is part of a complex process of problem-solving and thus the building of capacity *is* the result in itself.

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"… capacity development has been elevated from a strategy to a way in which development occurs – an objective – where the ultimate goal is nonetheless the fulfillment of universal human rights. Some theorists regard capacity development as a goal in itself and link it to empowerment. However, when it comes to managing capacity development in practice, it is often looked upon as a means towards an end, which can be a fairly concrete development objective. Donor and management demands often focus on the need to see something achieved with this newly acquired capacity – something that is quantifiable and measurable" (An Evaluation of Capacity Development Efforts By UNICEF in Bosnia & Herzegovina, p.4, accessed at: www.europeanevaluation.org/docs/Nyroos.pdf).

In the first approach, capacity building is often seen as a linear intervention that is associated with a "cause and effect" chain. For example, in this approach, capacity building would be seen as a chain that would link the training of research staff in resource mobilization with increased amounts of resources for research. While the example is simplistic, there is the notion of predictable cause and effect. In the second instance, capacity building is seen more in system terms, as a set of relationships, less predictable, more chaotic, harder to model and generally more complex. In the second instance, capacity building is seen as an ongoing problem-solving and learning process that becomes increasingly embedded in the relationship(s) being developed. In this instance, capacity building is seen as an intervention into the dynamic forces that are affecting a targeted system (e.g. resource mobilization). It is difficult to decide what intervention would work, though we do experiment with interventions and adapt our approaches based on feedback. Using the resource mobilization example, in some instances, success might not be increasing resources but rather stabilizing resources or reducing the decline in resources. Understanding the results of capacity building is embedded in context.

> For the GTZ, capacity development is both an end in itself and the means to an end, and indeed a specific procedure" (p.4). "As the means to an end, it lays the foundations needed to realize development policy objectives. As a procedure, it emphasizes the role and the intercultural competence of advisors as enablers, catalysts and facilitators. As an end in itself, it focuses on responsible citizens and effective organizations with the competencies required to play an active part in shaping the future of their country and enhancing their own well-being" (p.4). "Long-term and flexible measures: Capacity development needs a long-term, consistent approach that must not be sacrificed to short-term measures and the rapid dissemination of success stories Capacity Development for Sustainable Development, Policy Paper No.1, GTZ (p.5).

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This perspective implies that results from capacity building are continually evolving:

> "Research and development organizations need to continuously develop their capacities to deal with new opportunities and threats arising from changes in technology, markets, politics, and other factors. In this sense, there is no final, achievable goal for an organization's capacity development." (ISNAR Briefing #50, p.6).

In our project sample, the Health and Empowerment project with BAIF (100307) provides an example of IDRC working with an organization where the results from capacity building continually evolve. When IDRC first began working with BAIF over 20 years ago, the organization was interested in, inter alia, animal husbandry research. By 1999, they were seeking funding from Canada (IDRC, CIDA) to implement a women's health and empowerment project. Initially, the organization thought they had a model for working with women. However, during the development of the project, not only did they realize that they didn't have a model, but that they needed to develop an "empowerment model" for working with women, both internal and external to the organization. Thus this project was seen as a "change agent", i.e. something that would help to change the organization. Since IDRC began supporting BAIF in its organizational capacity and performance, the organization has shifted how it works. Results have evolved from being science and technology-oriented to becoming more socio-political in nature.

Finding 2: **It was rare that interviewees talked about development results as part of our CB conversation . For the most part, people interviewed spoke of 'research capacity building' as changing individual behavior as well as a wide assortment of individual, group, and organizational and inter-organizational relationships.**

Changing the skill sets of individuals and their relationship to others was the most frequently discussed outcome. Most project documents, as well as our interviewees, identified individual changes of behaviour, which was illustrated by the individual's actions with others as examples of CB. For instance, one case illustrated that, by building the behavioural skills of women, they were more capable of participating in decision-making processes in the community. As stated in an interview: "we supported the development of skills that empowered women in self-help groups for decision making. This made all the difference in their ability to appropriately use information in their group". Also interviewees discussed how skill-building led to changes in relationships between the women and local institutions. Examples included building the capacity of women to lobby groups such as banks and health centers to sustain groups and building the capacity of the organization to implement guidelines and policies that are more gender-sensitive.

In referring to the CBNRM project (100875), an interviewee stated that their capacity building activity was to empower communities to make decisions regarding common pasture management. Results related to researchers, farmers, and others being trained in new methods for pasture management, M&E, and Social and Gender Analysis (SAGA). Again, the outcome was the change in individual behavior that led to changing the relationships in communities.

Capacity Building Outcomes: Relationship changes that affect Behaviour

"*Using local knowledge, along with a livelihood approach was good. This is not part of the usual fisheries management approach. It's a process.*"

"*Farmer field training was an important result. We need to train them to enhance their informal way of communicating among themselves*".

"*Now there is a greater awareness of water demand management, how to do things differently. As well, the project [Regional Exchange Facility] facilitated opportunities for people to meet and network with others from the region*".

"*How to conduct research for conflict management. It helps us to answer the question of how we do we look at gender, water and power in a watershed context*".

"*Capacity building is really field building – building capacity in new intellectual fields, for example farming systems research or ecohealth. It's about building up communities of practice, building up a research approach*".

"*The main results are: trained people, building the capacity of individuals to carry out research, including planning, implementing, managing, etc. It's to enable institutions to help researchers. And third, it's building peer-to-peer capacities to build institutional capacity, institutional strengthening*".

"*Ultimately its research capacity. We need to start here. Equipping researchers and institutions to promote change, to communicate, how a researcher can enter into the dialogue of policy change*".

"*One result is about building the first or next generation of scholars in a field. Second, is the innovation of tools or databases of research? This is not necessarily a central element, but if there is no evidence than that's a problem. Third, we are helping to build the strength of political analysis. You need this to be effective – to affect change*".

Finding 3: **Changing individual behavior was the most often identified entry point for IDRC-supported capacity building efforts. This is consistent with Phase I findings.[9] As projects progressed, individual behavioural change often supported multipliers and institutional changes.**

Reviewing the project documents, we found that 71 percent of the projects target individuals and/or teams of individuals as the focus

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[9] Please see "Finding 7: For most IDRC staff the entry point for change is at the individual level; however, despite the individual-to-individual bias a significant number of those interviewed wanted to focus at the institutional and organizational level" in *Capacity Building at IDRC: Some Preliminary Thoughts*, April 2005.

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of change efforts. In some cases, IDRC staff targeted individuals who they felt would lead to multiplier training systems. For example, in 101992 there was direct training of individuals who where then tasked to build the capacity of others (see sidebar). The result of the initial training led to the training of additional staff at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in network management.

While individuals were the most targeted group, the results of the project went well beyond the individual. From the sample, targeted individuals were researchers, including young

> **Strengthening Capacity in Afghanistan**
>
> Beginning with an RSP, IDRC supplied funding to ICRISAT to train an individual from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in Afghanistan to develop and maintain a network system so that individuals within this ministry could share resources and communicate with each other (i.e., internet networking, e-mail). The funding provided by IDRC allowed this individual to travel to India in order to receive the training and also to visit IDRC-supported projects (e.g., telecentres in Pondicherry) and to expose him to different ideas and projects. According to IDRC, the intent is for this individual to share this training with other individuals in the Ministry. As well, ICRISAT is working with the Ministry to help build their institutional capacity to manage and report on the project (Interview with IDRC PO, 1 September 2005).

researchers (i.e., Masters, PhD students), and individuals from the local community such as community leaders, local government authorities, farmers, fishers or women's groups. Although these were the primary targets of the capacity building initiatives, in almost every case the individual outcome was linked to other important outcomes.

For example, in 102267 members of the Evaluation Unit trained specific individuals in Outcome Mapping with the intent that these individuals would then go on to build the Outcome Mapping capacity of not only their network members, but also other IDRC-supported project staff. The training of these individuals has resulted in the establishment of a "virtual institution" (LACOM) or network of individuals who are interested in training others in Outcome Mapping.[10]

Finding 4: **While the outcomes of IDRC projects are context specific, they can be categorized in terms of their target of change or outcome areas. These categories include change at individual, organizational, network, state/institutional, and societal (users of research) levels.**

Documents and interviews with staff/managers identified a wide variety of outcome changes that are associated with IDRC projects. At the end of Phase I of the study, three potential levels were identified for outcome changes: individual level, organizational (or entity) level, and systems (or institutional) level. As the research began for this paper, it became clear that a more appropriate framework for the Centre might include five levels, which would illustrate changes at

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[10] We have written a little case study of this found in Appendix 5.

the individual, organizational, network, state/institutional, and societal (users of research) level. By combining files and interviews, the review team was able to pull together a picture of the kinds of results IDRC achieves. Table 3.2 identifies for each area the types of outcomes IDRC obtains from its project work.[11] In general, the table offers a way to more fully and systematically describe and reflect on links between interventions and targeted changes. Also, it offers an opportunity to learn about how different types of outputs affect different targets. However, while the table is illustrative, it provides only part of the story of IDRC capacity results. Throughout our interviews, we were impressed with the depth of knowledge that individuals possessed about projects that was not captured in files or reports. While we tried to capture the information, we have not been able to verify the completeness of the accounts. We are concerned that, while we can report on some exciting outcomes, we are also missing a great deal[12].

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[11] The table only includes examples for four levels. Although there were no examples of outcomes from "users", this does not imply that they don't exist. In our data collection, we did not speak with "users" of the research. The category may be useful for IDRC and warrants further discussion.

[12] Note: Since some of the projects selected in this sample are still uncompleted, or were only recently completed (i.e., within the last 6 months), not all projects have data (interviews, file data) that state actual outcomes that have occurred.

Exhibit 3.2   Types of Outcomes According to Outcome Areas

TARGETED AREA	TYPE OF OUTCOME (AS STATED IN INTERVIEWS AND/OR DOCUMENTS)
State/Institutional	***Actual change in policy or practice*** • Policy influence at the national level – two strong institutions engaged policy makers. The researchers in one of these projects wrote several policy briefs; his institution now uses these briefs to engage policy makers. This was not originally envisioned at the project development stage (102279). • Policy influence at the national level – the Indian national government is now providing the funding to establish 600,000 Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs). The Ministry of Finance explicitly mentioned this initiative in the budget and pledged to provide the equivalent of $28M (CAD) to fund this (003778, 100580). • The research papers served as valuable resources for drafting ICT laws in Mongolia (101053). • Working with policymakers (mostly at the local level) regarding policies for natural resource management (NRM) that are based on a market economy. Also the introduction of "co-management" between farmers and policy makers (100875). • By including policymakers in the "city teams" in the workshops, it brought together people from different institutions and, via this window of opportunity, they were able to influence land policy in Kenya (101759). ***New knowledge*** • Local authorities now approach the research teams to get information that they need. This information moves from the local level (Panchayat) to the District level through to the state level (101595). ***New capacity*** • Three institutions in Palestine now coordinating/working together on the Palestinian refugee issue, working towards putting the refugee issue on the agenda and helping the group formulate policy positions. Now one master workplan to work from. Although each party has its own workplan, we also have a "master workplan" for all parties that define common issues (100971). • Representatives of Israeli and Palestinian institutions now working together to build/develop security plans and strategies toward a common goal, using a common understanding of the planning process based on a model they developed collaboratively (101931). • In some of the countries involved, project staff/beneficiaries are working directly with IT ministries in Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Laos (102042).
Network	***Actual change in policy or practice***

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TARGETED AREA	TYPE OF OUTCOME (AS STATED IN INTERVIEWS AND/OR DOCUMENTS)
	• As an outcome of the Participatory Development Communication project and the networking involved among the various participants, requested money from IDRC to establish a network in Vietnam for researchers to learn from each other. This developed into the Vietnam Upland Forum project (102064). • Participants from the regional/thematic groups share/exchange ideas, thoughts etc. on current work which helps to broaden our perspective (102952). • Development of SAGA projects in China as a result of the networking aspects of the original SAGA projects in Asia (101095).
Network (cont'd)	***New capacity*** • Project led directly to the creation of a network. Now people are working together on same/similar issues (100622). • Coordination among institutions that didn't used to work together, now working and coordinating together (100971). • Relationships that were established among different players who are now working together to institutionalize the use of/training in evaluation methodology (102267). • Phase II designed as a network project that brings together 9 countries that work together using a common methodology and technology towards a common goal. It was realized after Phase I that individual grants to each institution was a very artificial way of doing things and that designing the project as a network would be more useful (100570). • E-mail exchanges and debates among the institutions led to the establishment of a network on UA among 6 institutions in Eastern Africa. However, there was no mechanism/funding in place to sustain this network (101759). ***New knowledge*** Partnership building and networking among exchange participants at a regional level. They are generating new knowledge with regional players and discussing lessons and best practices (101806).
Organizational	***Actual change in policy or practice*** • Changing how universities think about gender and natural resource management, which affects how they teach natural science courses. Most universities in Latin America teach within a single discipline. Now they are thinking more in a multidisciplinary way (100997). • Universities changed courses and curriculum (100570). • The project helped our own organization since it helped us to articulate the issues we wanted to address in our own programming in terms of health, urban agriculture and gender. As well, coordinating the project helped to build the capacity of some of our staff. For example, one project officer uses the knowledge from the training course to carry out other trainings and gained administrative knowledge (101759).

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TARGETED AREA	TYPE OF OUTCOME (AS STATED IN INTERVIEWS AND/OR DOCUMENTS)
	• Recognition that the strength of IDRC/MIMAP is not institutional capacity building. As such, the project/program shifted its focus towards individuals and eventually networks (100622).
	• As an outcome of IDRC support over the years, the organization has shifted from being a technical research organization to being more about social change (100307).
	New capacity
	• MIDAS was able to extend its reputation and merged with MONITA NGO to form a single NGO, which is representing ICT council of Chamber of Commerce, illustrating its recognition by the Mongolian government (101053).
	• Because of this project, we are now recognized as Outcome Mapping experts, and we have access to more people and potential clients because of this. This has created more work opportunities for our organization, as well as helped to establish relationships and inter-organizational linkages. It has also resulted in the creation of a "virtual" organization that consists of people who are interested in training in Outcome Mapping in Latin America (102267).
	• Establishment of a women's NGO (101595).
Individual	*Actual change in practice*
	• Researchers are now doing CBNRM research differently: they're using the same methodology in the case studies in order to compare/synthesize the cases. This is unique (101255).
	• This project changed the behaviour of a male biologist at a partner NGO. He is now open to new approaches (i.e., gender and NRM research approach) (100997).
	• This project changed my thinking in terms of wastewater treatment (e.g., how a wastewater treatment plant is built, what land space is required, the uses of wastewater in a Muslim culture). Discussions regarding available options have been shared with government officials in the Ministry of Agriculture, Jordan (101806).
	• I now think of my own work differently because of my exposure to different ideas in this course (102952).
	• Some of the former individuals supported in the early stages of the project are now coordinating/hosting the networks we support (100622).
	• Team leaders now doing project management, which is new for them. Also, many people now being trained in and/or using local (Asian) language in programming software (102042).
	• Researchers/consultants now using/training in Outcome Mapping (102267).
	• Some participants in the regional training course are now doing their own training in the regions. As well, some are doing exploratory research/studies in areas that they weren't working in before, or where more information is needed (e.g., solid waste management). Neither of these were objectives (100641, 101759).

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Targeted Area	Type of Outcome (as stated in interviews and/or documents)
	• In Mongolia, the researchers are now implementing social and gender analysis, and participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches with the herders in the field, and several researchers are now facilitators of these new research processes and approaches (100875). • My project officer learned a great deal. She used the knowledge from the regional training course and developed and moderated her own course (gender block within waste module). She's now a regional leader in our organization (101759). • The purpose of the project was to develop research capacities within the organization instead of brining in outside researchers who don't know the local context. Our "errand boy" who started out doing data entry is now considered an expert in computer programs (Word, SPSS, GIS). Local women also now doing research – surveys – through a "learning by doing" process (101595). • When I first started working on an IDRC project they built my capacity in participatory action research. I applied this new approach into the project. Now I am training others at the university, and I work with young/inexperienced researchers, farmers and extension workers to build their capacity in this as well. Now the farmers are working with local authorities to develop policies (100876). • The researchers who were involved gained confidence in their work. Now working as a team – before working independently. The researchers learned the importance of working as a team/group of individuals (100876).

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TARGETED AREA	TYPE OF OUTCOME (AS STATED IN INTERVIEWS AND/OR DOCUMENTS)
Individual (cont'd)	**_New capacity_** • Junior researchers had the opportunity to work with senior researchers and build long-term skills, both in the partner organizations (NSI) as well as within each case study/project (102279). • The individuals supported by this IDRC project are building a critical mass of people that have received training in gender and NRM in the region. As well, the students have a positive influence on the organizations they work for (100997). • Absorption of peacekeeping literature increased the sophistication of the discussions and debates, which led to the development of a joint security plan (101931). • One of the first females to be trained with a fisheries PhD in the Caribbean that involved a multidisciplinary skill set (included political science and human geography). Her research not only built her own capacity to do multidisciplinary research in a natural science field, but it generated new knowledge about the communication bottlenecks that exist among various Caribbean organizations and institutions (101630). • The Agropolis Award helped me to do my research better, and it allowed me the opportunity to stay overseas for an extended period of time. Although it didn't give me any new research tools/approaches, it gave me the opportunity to implement the tools and approaches I had already learned or my PhD research and dissertation (003754, 100824). • Empowering individual women to lobby groups in order to sustain the women's self-help groups that have formed out of this project (100307). • Strengthened my capacity in relation to gender knowledge; strengthened my skills to negotiate (102952). • This project has provided individuals within our organization with more work opportunities (102267). • When I first started working on an IDRC project they built my capacity in participatory action research. I applied this new approach into the project. (100876). **_New knowledge_** • The theses generated by the Masters/PhD level students have contributed to the knowledge of the field (101255, 101923). • Her research not only built her own capacity to do multidisciplinary research in a natural science field, but it generated new knowledge about the communication bottlenecks that exist among various Caribbean organizations and institutions (101630). My participation in the regional training course helped me to enter a PhD program in Canada. It also helped my employment opportunities in Ghana (003754, 100824).

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Finding 5: **There is a wide assortment of outcomes associated with the different interventions used by IDRC. Categorizing them underscores the complexity of reporting on outcome results at the agency level.**

In the first phase of the study we identified a wide assortment of approaches used by IDRC to engage in CB. The side box provides the data. We took this data, categorized it into four main categories, and tried to link it with the outcomes we identified through our document review and our interviews. Exhibit 3.3 is the result of this analysis. As can be seen, there are over a hundred categories of outcomes associated with the interventions used by IDRC. It should be noted that the original table had a lot of duplication within the

Box1: Interventions Used by Centre Staff/Managers to Build Capacity
Small grants funding
Support to formal studies (Master's and PhD)
Training courses (research and evaluation methodologies and approaches)
One-on-one exchanges, TA, face-to-face interaction
Study exchanges, visits
Conferences, workshops and other professional public venues or forums
Networks and networking
Award programs (Agropolis, EcoHealth Award)
Learning by doing
Linking senior researchers with junior researchers
Having recipients work with experts
Writing experiences (manuscripts, theses, articles for peer-reviewed journals)
Sustained mentoring
Centres of Excellence

cells. For illustrative purposes, we removed duplication and tried to put into the cells the predominant outcomes for the various intersections. The point of this table is that there are a large number of outcomes and types of outcomes that can be reported. What does not exist is a common language for POs to use so that they can report on areas that IDRC is interested in.[13] What should be reported? What should be omitted? What is important for IDRC to know as an institution? These issues have not been dealt with systematically by IDRC and are being left to project officers to determine. One of the results that emerges from this is that it is difficult to learn lessons. For example, what has been the experience of IDRC in education and training? When are education and training interventions (e.g. to improve research skills) better than mentoring? When should IDRC staff support networking to achieve its results rather than

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[13] It is important to note that a common language would not imply standardization, which may not be a useful approach in the IDRC context.

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training programs? There seems to be a lot of project experience that is not systematically captured.

Exhibit 3.3   Examples of the Interventions used in Capacity Building

	EDUCATION & TRAINING	MENTORING/COACHING	NETWORKS/NETWORKING	FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION
Individual • Actual change in practice • New capacity • New knowledge	• Applying learned research/evaluation methodologies • Using new approaches to research (gender, participatory research) • Building long-term skills through scholarship, small grant funding	• Establishing relationships based on trust • Receiving recognition from others • Gaining confidence in their professional work • Thinking outside the box	• Linking with other researchers (same field, different context) • Producing higher quality research	• Seeking advice from IDRC staff on monitoring visits • Interacting and networking with peers, other actors at workshops, conferences, etc. • Responding to probing questions in a sophisticated manner
Organizational • Actual change in policy or practice • New capacity • New knowledge	• Using communications skills to influence policy, linking with other organizations • Applying knowledge from OM to the organization (P, M & E)	• Using organizational learning/reflection for organizational development	• Linking with like-minded organizations • Initiating and/or participating in joint ventures with other organizations or donors • Establishing partnerships	• Establishing/maintaining relations with IDRC • Receiving/accepting invitations to events

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	EDUCATION & TRAINING	MENTORING/COACHING	NETWORKS/NETWORKING	FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION
Networks (regional/global) • Actual change in policy or practice • New capacity • New knowledge	• Applying learned research/evaluation methodologies • Using new approaches to research (gender, participatory research)	• Peer learning, mutual support among development researchers, practitioners, etc. • Establishing relationships based on trust • Receiving recognition from others • Gaining confidence in their professional work • Using organizational learning/reflection for organizational development	• Working with others on a regional/global level • North-South collaboration and exchange among actors • Producing higher quality research • Sharing/exchanging with others within own organization	• Working with others on a regional/global level • Seeking advice and opinions from others, experts, etc.
State/Institutional • Actual change in policy or practice • New capacity • New knowledge	• Using research findings/results and/or new processes to influence policies • Recognizing the need for policy/decision makers to know more about using research		• Working with policymakers & decision makers directly on the project	• Working with policymakers/decision makers directly on the project

	EDUCATION & TRAINING	MENTORING/COACHING	NETWORKS/NETWORKING	FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION
Societal (users) • Actual change in policy or practice • New capacity • New knowledge	• Using research findings/results and/or new processes to influence policies • Recognizing the need for policy/decision makers to know more about using research	• Working with researchers to establish relevance, use, etc.	• Linking with researchers, other users (lobbyists, advocates, business, public sector, etc.)	• Linking with researchers, other users (lobbyists, advocates, business, public sector, etc.) • Influencing others to reform/change policies

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Finding 6: **There was more focus on the boundary partners of IDRC partners than expected. Identifying outcomes of IDRC's capacity building requires researching further down the chain of results.**

Our interviews with IDRC partners indicated that their interest in IDRC's support was to help their beneficiaries. We were surprised to hear from partner interviewees that the majority of the capacity building efforts are between IDRC's partners and their boundary partners, rather than between IDRC and their direct research partners. Thus, one might identify the intervention strategy used by IDRC as a mixture of peer learning and a South-South exchange.

This was an interesting finding since, although IDRC program staff and

> "The objective of this project was to build research capacities. We selected a district that was 'backward' to build local capacity in participatory research. We wanted to develop research capacities within the community, instead of bringing in outside researchers, transplanting researchers into the community".

> "One of the main objectives, an important objective, is to build human resource capacity to develop the local language software. If there is no local capacity available, then we would have to bring in outside experts".

> "My colleague spent a lot of time working with the local project staff, working with women's groups and local organizations to build their research capacities".

> "Built the capacity of my PhD student".

> "For me, the two objectives were to create a group of policy planners with a common understanding and knowledge base and to assist the policy planning process".

> "An important component was the human resource development. Not just the students, but also the professors and support staff".

managers talk about building the capacity of their partners, data from the partners show that the meat of the capacity building activities (and therefore the outcomes) rest with IDRC's boundary partners. This has important implications in terms of tracking and reporting outcomes. Reports on the work and changes with partners, a typical reporting pattern and necessary for IDRC's accountability as an agency, would not adequately capture the real changes and results.

In our interviews with IDRC partners, capacity building efforts within the project were often expressed in terms of building the capacity of others such as researchers, policymakers, and community members. Rarely did the partners express having their own capacity built. In those few instances where the partners did discuss having their own capacities developed, it was often expressed in terms of being trained in a specific research activity or how to carry out a specific function (e.g. training in a new research or evaluation methodology).

IDRC needs to decide how the tracking and reporting of results is best carried out. Should the focus be on IDRC's partners – or their partner's partners? If the focus were to be on IDRC's partners, then the Centre would need to shift its focus towards institutions in the South (with the results emphasizing institutional capacity and

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performance). If IDRC decides to continue its focus on funding individuals (via their partners), then the results would tend to be more about if and how their partners are building the capacities of researchers (rather than if and how IDRC is building the capacity of researchers).

Finding 7: **High profile, highly educated researchers and/or consultants were frequently the partner in our sample. Some have been receiving funds from IDRC for more than 20 years.**

In our desire to speak to partners, we asked POs who were the people that they felt represented their partner link in projects. Out of over 50 people identified we were able to speak to 33. What surprised us was that of the 33 to whom we spoke, 19 had doctorate degrees (see Appendix 4). Most had been working in their respective fields for over 20 years. For the most part, these people do not need to have their capacities in research built, developed or strengthened. Although 30 percent of the recipients for research projects had never received funding from IDRC before, there were several partners who have been working with the Centre since the 1970s or 1980s.

In at least two cases, the IDRC partners we spoke with were Canadian researchers/professors located at Canadian universities who work with researchers and/or research beneficiaries located in developing countries. In effect, IDRC staff/managers work with researchers who are, in essence, parallel to them. This finding posits the question: Whose capacity is IDRC trying to build? Although funding repeat customers may be a sign of persistence, if the repeat customers are established career professors at Canadian universities then the Centre may want to re-visit how it articulates who's capacity is being built.

4. What Works – and What Doesn't

Interviewees indicated that the Centre has been successful in identifying and working with partners to provide projects that make a difference. Individual projects point to important results that have been obtained as a result of IDRC partnerships. Based on its assessment of the information collected, the study team concluded that many aspects of what IDRC does work well in contributing to international development. The sections that follow support this contention by elaborating on: 1) IDRC's processes for capacity building, 2) the Centre's role as a legitimating agency for research and development, and 3) the use of peer learning in development cooperation.

4.1 Process

Consistent with our findings in the previous phase, IDRC strongly values a 'people-centered' approach to capacity building that places high importance on partnerships, local ownership/knowledge, and participation as crucial elements in the development process.

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Finding 8: **IDRC's process for capacity building is consistent with the OECD's Principles and Best Practices for Capacity Development (2003).**

In 2003 the DAC commissioned a study to review work in CB. The study identified a set of principles that it found to represent the best practices for engaging in CB. We used these principles to see how well the projects in our sample lived up to them. If more than 75% of the projects had characteristics that supported the principle, we gave IDRC a checkmark for being consistent with the best practice principles. Exhibit 4.1 provides the results of the analysis. As can be seen, our analysis says that most IDRC projects support the best practice principles. The table below comments on key principles or characteristics embodied in IDRC's processes for capacity building:

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Exhibit 4.1   Projects in the sample and consistency with DAC best practice principles

PRINCIPLE	PROJECT ASSESSMENT	COMMENTS
Don't Rush	✓	Many partner expressed appreciation of the iterative learning process, and the time that IDRC staff take in planning projects
Respect the value system and foster self esteem	✓	Many partners expressed their appreciation that IDRC respected the views and perspectives of researchers in the South
Scan locally and globally, reinvent locally	✓	IDRC projects are often built on program staffs' knowledge of the region, issue, problematique and therefore often involves scanning of issues before implementing at the local level
Challenge the mindsets and power differentials	✓	New approaches to research and evaluation are seen as challenging mindsets

Inclusion of community members in projects which sometimes challenge the power differentials |
| Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes | X | Some partners claim that IDRC's project based approach is not conducive to a long term process like capacity building and therefore IDRC capacity building initiatives are not sustainable |
| Establish positive incentives | ✓ | Local ownership of the project/research helps to establish incentives for partners/beneficiaries

Working with international experts helps to provide incentives for young/inexperienced researchers |
Integrate external inputs into national priorities, processes and systems	X	
Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones	✓	IDRC rarely uses the "external consultancy" model, i.e. a donor brings in an external consultant to train, provide technical assistance, etc. Program staff identify highly educated/qualified people to work with as partners (existing capacity) to build capacities of beneficiaries
Stay engaged under difficult circumstances	✓	In at least one case, IDRC staff remained engaged throughout the Infitada period in Palestine in order to build the capacity of institutions to work collaboratively
Remain accountable to ultimate beneficiaries	✓	

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IDRC places a high value on the learning that takes place between IDRC program staff and their partners. Often when projects are developed, an iterative, participatory process is followed that involves both the partner and IDRC program staff. For example, in one case (102267) the recipient worked closely with IDRC. The key individual at the recipient institution (IIFAC) stated: *IDRC pushed us to be more up front, that it was about what we were doing, not what IDRC, was going to do. It was about us learning. That was new for us*. As a result of this learning, *we have been able to take advantage of unexpected opportunities*.

> "IDRC respects the opinions of Latin American researchers…their point of view, recommendations, suggestions and so forth. I think this is very important".
>
> "IDRC is quite flexible. They are willing to see the researcher's point of view even if the exact objectives could not be pinpointed at the very beginning. They still respect what we think".
>
> "Ownership by the locals. This is really important and IDRC understands that".
>
> "IDRC is committed to development from within".

Many of the partners expressed their appreciation for IDRC's flexibility in allowing things to evolve. This flexibility contributed to researchers perspectives and local knowledge being brought into the development of a project.

Finding 9: **For both IDRC staff/managers and their partners, capacity building is seen as being more than just a technical fix: it is about developing a relationship that engages partners in solving key challenges. Partners like the competence of IDRC staff coupled with their personalized approach.**

Many partners stated that IDRC program staff became involved in the substantive issues. This is seen as being especially valued since "other donors often just give money and then expect results without really understanding the issues". On the other hand, when there is little or no follow up on specific training activities, this is also felt by partners. In one case (102279), a managing partner expressed the need for more resources dedicated to one-on-one mentoring, rather than workshops.

> "IDRC has an excellent process, both financial and substantive. It engages itself in the process"
>
> "Training courses can't be understood by themselves. The institutes that organized the courses already have networks and a knowledge basis to do UA".
>
> "IDRC's approach to capacity building allowed us to do what was appropriate and not use specific instructions for how to do capacity building".
>
> "It would have helped the project if there had been more one-on-one mentoring rather than just the training and group workshops".

Finding 10: **Funding and support from IDRC helps to create windows of opportunity for researchers who might not otherwise have the time, money or space to carry out the research.**

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Partners interviewed stated that IDRC funding was very important, since so few donors fund researchers in their region. This funding provided opportunities to carry out research which might not have been done otherwise. In this sense, researchers were provided with the time, money and space they needed to do the research – research that produced data and evidence that could be used to influence policies or work towards developing new technologies.

With locations in several regions in the South[14] IDRC has the ability to be on the ground and have the strategic intelligence to know what research is needed and/or valued by researchers in the South. Moreover, their partners are very adept at knowing and pursuing important issues within communities, and in some cases, are very skillful at creating strong relationships with local communities.

> "I had a lot of transactions with IDRC about ideas and issues. They are very good intellectual partners, and use 'social learning' processes, and allow partners to make decisions as they learn".
>
> "IDRC funds gave the core team…[the opportunity] to explore, experiment, and provide empirical data to the decision makers of the university so that we were able to convince the decision makers about the potentiality of ICT for increasing the quality of our services".
>
> "Without IDRC funds, we did not have any means to do what we did because the top management at that time would not allocate enough funding to do the exploration and experiment".

4.2 IDRC as a Legitimating Agency

The literature describes legitimacy as being a critically important ingredient for the long-term survival of an organization or system. Building legitimacy at the individual and organizational level is critical for fledgling researchers and research institutes.

 "Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman 1995: 574).

The number of people we interviewed who brought up the issue of legitimacy, albeit in a number of different ways, impressed us. Legitimating individuals, groups, organizations and networks is a resource IDRC has and uses.

Finding 11: **Partners interviewed valued the importance of IDRC support to their own personal reputation and that of the groups they work with.**

Our interviews indicate that IDRC funding provides not simply a financial benefit, but also a normative one. For several partners, funding is not the critical element in their relationship with the Centre. They see primary value extending to the respect and value of

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[14] IDRC has six regional offices and which operate in Latin America and the Caribbean, North Africa & the Middle East, West & Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

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their knowledge and experience, and the notion of partnership itself. Partnership provides several benefits, including: 1) providing researchers access to a local, regional and global network, and 2) offering an association with a global center--IDRC. This association is seen as supporting legitimacy and the capacities associated with legitimacy (power, quality of work, trustworthiness). For example, one partner indicated that linking with the Centre provided access to some of the leading researchers in the field: "IDRC accesses big names in the field—when I work with them this helps to legitimize my work and to add to my reputation".

Stakeholders often assess their partners in terms of their desirability. Linking to IDRC increases an individual's attractiveness to stakeholders. As one interview stated: "IDRC's support has made our work more visible and more acceptable. The government takes us much more seriously!" IDRC's support not only gives legitimacy externally but internally as well. Belawati (100570) stated that the University would not have provided the funds or the support for ICT distance education without IDRC support: "Without IDRC funds, we did not have any means to do what we did because the top management at that time would not allocate enough funding to do the exploration and experiment."

IDRC's engagement with individuals and groups is seen as providing a great deal more than just funds. We have identified the value of the POs to the organization as a source of TA, but IDRC's association may be just as important as TA to the capacity building process. Institutional stakeholders like IDRC provide legitimacy, but do they manage it? The ability to legitimize (or delegitimize) can be seen as one among a variety of resources that organizational stakeholders possess, thus the determination of which stakeholders to pay attention to becomes a critical decision for IDRC staff.

Finding 12: **Interviewees identify knowing a potential partner as an important component of the IDRC capacity building selection process. This helps the "management of legitimacy".**

What emerges from this study is a model for capacity building that focuses on how IDRC staff/managers are adept at bringing the right people together. This applies to their work with their partners and extends to helping their partners bring the right people together to implement research projects. This contributes to inter-institutional linkages being established between and among different partners that might not otherwise know of, or be aware of, each other and their respective work. For example, it was noted by both partners involved in the IIFAC case, managed by the Evaluation Unit (102267), that the Evaluation Unit officer "was very intuitive" in terms of bringing the two partners together. "Strengths that each partner brings to the project are very complementary, and have proven to be very effective for this project" (Interview, Nov.11, 2005). This officer was able to help these two partners establish a partnership that has developed into a joint institutional effort to build a hub of evaluation knowledge and skills on a regional level. Moreover, both partners

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stated that they had learned a lot about the strengths that each brought to the table, and that their respective organizations had been strengthened by the partnership. This was an unexpected outcome since, initially, this partnership was not envisaged by IDRC, but rather evolved through IDRC program staffs' knowledge of their partners.

Knowledge of the regional context is also very useful for matching people in the research process. For example, in the WADI Mena Regional Exchange Facility project, the responsible IDRC officers brought together researchers, policymakers and representatives from civil society as participants in a formal exchange/site visit project. Such matchmaking was also an objective in some of the Urban Agriculture Regional Training courses. In many cases, the outcome is that relationships are carried on after the exchange visit or training workshop, thus leading to the implementation of new ideas or initiatives. There are indications that the nurturing of relationships over time before entering into a project influences IDRC's willingness to legitimate future partners and their research.

4.3 Peer Learning

Finding 13:   Project partners support the peer learning approach in contrast to the frequently-used expert-driven model. IDRC partners tend to replicate this model in their own South-South partnerships.

Peer learning is a self-directed learning process where people can come together to share challenges and experiences with others who are doing similar work or who face similar problems. It is a tool that is identified in over 40 percent of the sample projects and one that IDRC staff and its partners strongly support as a capacity building approach: "Peer learning affords participants the chance to receive feedback, collectively solve problems on a formal and informal basis, and develop skills". (Community Partners, 2005)

As discussed above, IDRC's partners who receive funding are more frequently highly-educated researchers (located in either the North or the South) who are conducting research to improve the quality of life for people in developing countries. The relationships that program staff have developed and established through this work are based on trust and a mutual respect for learning. It follows, then, that the approach adopted for capacity building is both collaborative and respectful of local knowledge and conditions (rather than the expert-driven model). Peer learning is always context specific and recognizes that indigenous knowledge is crucial to meeting expectations for results.

IDRC's partners similarly seem to find favor in this approach to building the capacity of targeted individuals and organizations (e.g. researchers, farmers, fishers, trainers/facilitators,

"One of the key objectives of our research was to develop research capacities within the community".

"In order for us to test the feasibility of ICT and its effectiveness on enhancing students' learning satisfaction and achievement, we had to build the capacity of the university's academic staff as well as the students involved in the experiment".

women's groups). The emphasis on building capacity from within leads to collaboration and the sharing of lessons between/among people in the South.

5. New Approaches Being Implemented

Two approaches that will affect the way IDRC builds capacity (both by its partners and on its own) are being implemented by the Centre and should be mentioned before we move on to the issues and gaps identified in our assessment of capacity-building programming. The following two sections comment on the concept of "complete capacity" and on the Annual Learning Forum (ALF), which addresses a common theme and uses project/program-reporting mechanisms as a means for program staff to learn from each other.

5.1 Complete Capacity

Recently, the Centre published its next five-year strategy, the *Corporate Strategy and Program Framework (CS+PF), 2005-2010*. This document introduces the concept of "complete capacity". According to those that we spoke to about this concept (mostly at the senior management level), "complete capacity" refers to *projects and institutions*, not people. Although the ideas behind this concept are probably not new themselves, the phrase is now used to express an approach towards more complete projects, involving ancillary activities such as communication and dissemination capacities or fundraising capacities. Being able to communicate the research findings/results in an effective manner to influence policymakers is an important element in the research process. Implementation of this concept would signal a shift from just focusing on the research itself, and the monitoring of activities and the reporting of results to the Centre.

The concept of "complete capacity" may help to address some of the issues associated with the Centre's use of a project-based approach and its implications for the sustainability of longer-term processes like capacity building. For example, the project selected by the Partnership and Business Development Division (PBDD) for this sample (101653) started as a research support project in Asia to train people in fundraising for research organizations. Due to the success of this project and the ensuing demand from partners, PBDD has subsequently expanded this initiative into a larger project of $1.7 million and broadened the scope to the institutional level to provide training to IDRC partners in all regions. As stated by the Division's Director:

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"Although the individual is necessary it's not sufficient. For a long time, the Centre was supporting strong individuals who were working in failing institutions. But financial sustainability is a necessary condition to a supportive environment. An institution needs strong management, funding, administration, finance, and good governance. It's all linked to the research". (Interview, 1 December, 2005)

Supporting partners to attain financial sustainability may help to address the concerns of those who feel that, if IDRC continues to provide support only through projects, then the capacity building efforts won't be sustainable once the project ends.

5.2 Annual Learning Forum

The Annual Learning Forum (ALF) is a framework for organizational learning which allows IDRC staff and management to step back and reflect on the Centre's experience in order to promote improved programming and operations. Using documentation from the Centre's project reporting system in a one-day all-staff meeting, participants focus on various issues with the intent to generate, deepen, and document IDRC experiences. The overall goals of the ALF are:

- To promote individual learning by IDRC staff from all branches and all levels; and

- To provide an opportunity for Centre staff to share knowledge and experiences between themselves.

Learning opportunities such as the ALF may be used to provide partners with additional mechanisms for learning about capacity building and, as such, provide IDRC with additional opportunities to capture this learning. One year the focus of the forum could be on capacity building – how programs address this and how they build capacity with IDRC partners.

6. Issues and Gaps

Our assessment of the information collected in the course of this evaluation indicates that IDRC's work in capacity building at the project level is extremely diverse. While our general impression of the cross-section of projects chosen by IDRC staff is favorable, we are aware of the bias that is inherent in such a sampling procedure. Generalizations at any level are difficult to make because of this diversity. In this section, we put forward observations and raise issues for IDRC consideration and discussion.

Issue 1: Capturing project-level results

Perhaps the first issue that we should raise is, "what is a research capacity building project in IDRC?" This study found that project officers had no systematic way of determining what is, or is not, a capacity building project. Each person seems to make this determination differently. As reported earlier, over 40 percent of the projects identified for this study were not coded 'capacity building'.

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We have had wide ranging discussions with IDRC with respect to the importance, or lack thereof, of having an institutional operational definition for capacity building. Such a definition would provide parameters to staff on which projects are CB and which are not. The overwhelming response from IDRC staff is to keep the existing approach.

A related issue for consideration is the inconsistency in reporting results within projects. As the findings in the results section indicate (see findings 1-7), there are several hundred results areas (outputs and outcomes at the individual, organizational, network, state/institutional and societal/users level) that are possible to report on in any given capacity building project. We found that the documents accessible to us often provided only half the story. In order to understand more about IDRC capacity building and project results, one needed to interview staff, partners and others. We know and understand that each project result is specific to the context and is written about in a variety of documents such as PCRs, trip/monitoring reports, technical reports, and project and program evaluations. And we know that each documents reflects capacity building in its local context. However, the complexity induced by this diversity raises several critical questions. What results areas should be reported on? What should be omitted? Should each of the target areas be explored? Again, to roll up project level results, it is necessary to systematize reporting.

There are ample arguments to suggest that the Centre should explore whether a more systematic reporting approach to capacity building could help in capturing results and perhaps lessons. To this end, an example is provided in Appendix VI, which may have value as a catalyst for discussion to identify how to more systematically capture project results.

There are equally strong arguments that say the Centre should not roll up results from the project level because the Centre's current approach is innovative and already follows best practices. From this perspective, individual case studies may be sufficient to document and analyze results without rolling up all the results from individual projects.

Issue 2: Capturing program -level results

Is the CB work programmatic? Is there a larger purpose that CB is contributing to? As part of Phase II, we reviewed several Program Review Documents[15]and used the data to better understand the CB work at the program level. As we looked at the Program Reviews we noticed that they do not seem to discuss CB efforts in a program sense, i.e. in reference to the larger outcomes CB efforts are supporting such as the building of a particular discipline, the development of national or global research capacity. This raises the question of whether or

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[15] Program reviews included: ACACIA review, CBNRM Review, CFP Review, ECOHEALTH Review, PLAW Review, MIMAP Review, among others.

not IDRC programs have outcomes that are distinct from project
outcomes?

The same is true at an agency level. Does IDRC, as an agency, have any
strategic interest in research capacity building? If yes, what is that
interest? From our work in this study, we would argue that one of the
potential areas of expertise of IDRC is how it does its work. Partners
consistently describe IDRC's approach to capacity building as
laudatory. Our assessment of the capacity building process against
criteria identified by DAC indicates that agency staff engages its
partners in capacity building according to best practices.

While capacity building is often talked about as the way IDRC
functions, there is little internal research done on these processes.
How is local research capacity built? Besides process, we would think
there are other substantive areas that might be identified and
explored (e.g. functional[16]). Is there a special niche that IDRC
occupies within CB?

Issue 3: Is the Project-Based Approach and capacity building compatible?

A number of IDRC staff questioned whether capacity building is
compatible with the IDRC project approach. They raised a number of
issues in this regard. Are results sustainable? What happens when the
project funding runs out? How do you sustain the capacity building
efforts? What happens to the partner institution implementing this
project? As one PO mused: "The project-based approach is not
compatible with institution building".

In our review of other agencies that work in this area, this was often
found to be a problem. However, for IDRC it is more complicated.
Often, our study revealed that IDRC staff members were building
relationships with project partners. When projects stopped, these
relationships would continue. This is not the case in other agencies
we have reviewed. Thus, though IDRC operates from a project mode, it
also operates at another level as well, a relationship level. While
the relationships are often personal and not institutional, it does
raise the issue about how these relationships can become more
recognized and transparent in the institutional norms of IDRC.

Issue 4: Financing capacity building at the organizational and state level

In several interviews, we had very extensive discussions about whether
IDRC's funding capabilities limited the targets for change. One Team
Leader for MIMAP and long-time IDRC staff member stated that initially
MIMAP focused on institutions/organizations but after eight-to-nine
years shifted to individuals/groups and networks. He felt that the

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[16] IDRC's evaluation unit has been building evaluation capacity with its
partners and developing innovative tools to do so. Communication and Fund
raising are doing the same. Are these special areas of research capacity
building in which IDRC as an agency should strategically invest?

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focus on individuals and networks was more applicable both in terms of: 1) IDRC not having the resources for large-scale organizational/institutional capacity building, and 2) this approach being more appropriate in this era of global development.

On the other hand, interviewees identified the need for IDRC to work more at the organizational and network (discipline) level. The issue for many was whether or not IDRC had the capacity to fund organizational change efforts. As we contemplated this issue, we kept on coming back to a major change model IDRC was using. Basically, IDRC creates a long-term relationship with an individual and in turn with that individual's organization. This long-term relationship is not dependent on a large amount of resources –more likely, it just requires some small level of resources provided at strategic times. This capacity building model is interesting and one that is not well researched in the literature on CB. IDRC might want to learn more about it and more formally support this.

Issue 5: Learning and building expertise

As we have learned in this study capacity building at IDRC takes many forms and works in many ways. Sometimes it as a functional intervention, other times its as a human capability issue or it is linked to peer learning networks/partnerships. Capacity building can take the form of a systems intervention or a technical fix. What is emerging from a wide variety of studies and observations about capacity building is that our knowledge base needs to be more systematically developed. This is particularly true when we deal with capacity building related to networks, institutions, organizations, disciplines and states. We know a great deal more about building the knowledge and skills of individual researchers.[17]

At issue is whether IDRC wants to build its own systematic knowledge base around capacity building. Up to now, much of the learning and expertise within IDRC has been developed in a relatively ad hoc, informal way: 1) individuals become interested in capacity building, 2) a report is written, 3) an evaluation is done. Interviewees indicated that this approach is not robust enough to develop the internal systems and individual capabilities needed to ensure that what is learned is captured and shared. As one IDRC staff-member said: "…we have no easy way to learn from the capacity building lessons from our colleagues and partners—our files don't do it nor do we have anyone tasked with knowing about what is happening with regards to research capacity—what happens is we go and see people we know are doing good work and talk to them".

At least one partner lamented that she wished IDRC had more resources to allow project staff to meet and network with one another. She has often met other IDRC funding/project recipients through her own work,

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[17] See Francis Fukuyama's State- Building for a discussion on our knowledge of Capacity Building beyond the individual.

but saw additional value in IDRC bringing together recipients to discuss their approaches to capacity building.

Recently, the Centre began addressing the lack of cross-learning among programs and program staff. ALF focuses on a common theme (e.g. networks, policy influence) and uses project/program-reporting mechanisms (e.g. PCRs) as a way for program staff to learn from each other. ALF may serve as a useful mechanism, but more can be done to promote sharing knowledge and expertise in capacity building[18] within IDRC[19].

Issue 6: IDRC and the community of organizations building research capacity

We had an opportunity to have discussions with both Rockefeller Foundation and WBI with respect to their work on research capacity building. While these conversations were neither part of the study we were conducting for IDRC nor part of our TORs, we were struck by the similarity of issues related to assessing CB that these organizations were facing. Similar questions were being addressed. What are the results of our capacity building efforts? Are we making progress? How do we know? What works? What doesn't? How do we explain our capacity building work to our political stakeholders? What is our institutional strength?

What has been learned about building research capacity amongst the agencies? Over the years, there have been a variety of studies and conferences on the topic but, as at IDRC, these tend to be ad hoc. The international community needs to place more emphasis on how building research capacity is being carried out globally and how what is learned is being shared.

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[18] Current views on CB draw from advances in research in a number of areas, such as public administration, organizational and change management, community development, institutional and development economics and from practice and engagement. also challenge conventional wisdom. Recent work in systems theory and learning are important avenues for agencies to explore with respect to issues such as "complete capacity" and the use of indicators.

[19] As a multi-disciplinary field, it is important not to get locked into a single approach. Thus one can think about creating a variety of mechanisms, which could include specific units providing resources, expertise etc. and a "floating resident"(e.g., fellowships, sabbaticals) that would not only bring in expertise from this particular field or discipline, but from other complementary areas.

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7. Next Steps

Issues of capacity and performance remain at the heart of debate in the field of international development and cooperation. Academics and practitioners alike are engaged in providing answers to some very basic questions. What constitutes capacity? How do you build capacity and make it last? Who should be involved? How does capacity translate into performance?

In this study we looked at 43 projects and identified a wide range of results linked to the work of IDRC. In addition, we identified some of the factors that contributed to the success of IDRC's work. It is important to recognize that this work has been done through reading files[20] and discussing the files with a two or three IDRC staff and partners.

The study identified a wide assortment of outputs and outcomes related to projects. It found that IDRC engages in many best practices in its work in CB and that an important role of IDRC is as a legitimating agency. The study also found that the IDRC coding system is applied inconsistently and that the data that exists in IDRC files does not provide a complete picture of the results of capacity building efforts. Thus any generalizations and analysis of the data needs to be dealt with carefully.

The next phase of this study would normally be a more in-depth analysis of IDRC's work through case studies. We need to discuss the costs and benefits of this. In general, a case would trace the results of the Centre's capacity building interventions and provide a greater understanding of the influence of contextual factors. Files and interviews only gave us a superficial understanding of the types of results that occurred and the context they occurred in. More in-depth tracking and analysis through cases would give us deeper insight into the results of research capacity building. In addition, the cases studied should also provide greater insight into the process of IDRC's work. Interviews indicate that the process is: "best practice!" Does this hold up under closer scrutiny? Similarly, it would be worthwhile to follow up on the issue of institutional legitimacy. Does having IDRC as a partner affect other stakeholders? How? Why?

The concern at this stage is whether doing a small number of cases--as originally proposed--will provide the type or the level of insights expected by senior managers. In this regard, the definition of the questions to be answered and decision on the variety of purposive project selection is key. We should give this approach and the identification of the potential case studies a great deal of thought.

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[20] We have identified this limitation.

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Appendix I IDRC's Contributions to Capacity Building: Interview Protocol IDRC Program Staff/Managers: Phase III

Preamble:

Thank you for your time today. As you know, SMC, PPG and the Evaluation Unit are working collaboratively on a number of CAF-related studies. As part of this endeavor, the Evaluation Unit is currently managing the strategic evaluation on IDRC's contribution to capacity building in the South. The Evaluation Unit commissioned Universalia Management Group (UMG) to carry out a number of components for this study. The first component (Phase II) is now complete and the draft report is available on the Evaluation Unit's website.

UMG is now starting Phase III of this study, which is looking at **the kinds of capacity building results achieved** in IDRC-supported projects. For this phase, we are interested in looking at specific projects that were (a) identified by program staff or management as being of particular interest with regards to capacity building or (b) projects that were categorized in EPIK as being a "capacity building project". We will be looking at both research projects and research support projects from all parts of the Centre (Programs Branch, President's Office and Resources Branch) in order to gain a deeper understanding of the kinds of capacity building results IDRC contributes to, and the different targets or outcome areas (individuals, organizations, networks, the state, societal – users of research) and the interventions that affect change in those outcome areas.

During this phase of the study, we also want to **speak with partners** in order to get an understanding of their experience with the project and to allow them the opportunity to reflect on capacity building interventions used by IDRC, what works, what doesn't work, and why. As such, it would be very helpful if **you could give us the names and coordinates of the key stakeholders for this project** that you feel we should speak with (e.g., researchers or others involved in the project).

Here are the questions we would like you to think about for our interview:

Project Characteristics:

1) Project Name:

2) What was the primary purpose of the project (e.g., to test a new methodology, to apply a new/different approach to research in your field, to generate knowledge in a new field of study, to link research to policy; to build capacity of (target) to do something/do something different); other purpose(s)?

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3) What type of support did the project receive (e.g., award, grant, scholarship, fellowship, other)? How many project team members? What kind of institution received the grant (e.g., university, research center, NGO)? Have you or your team worked with this institution and/or researcher before?

4) What capacity building activities were carried out in this project? How effective were they?

Results:

1) What were the major (actual) outputs (e.g., research papers, journal articles, policy briefs, presentations at conferences, trained people)? How are/were these outputs different from the planned outputs?

2) What were the major (actual) outcomes of the research (if the project is completed)? How are/were these different from the planned outcomes?

3) (a) To what extent did the project build the capacity of:
   − Individuals
   − Groups or networks
   − Organizations
   − The state
   − Societal − consumers, users, individuals, groups

   (b) Were these the actual capacities targeted at the outset of the project? If not, what changed during the project that the target/outcome area changed?

4) Did anyone involved in the research receive any kind of training at any point during the research project (design, planning, implementation)? If not, why not?

5) In your opinion what were the three most important results that IDRC funding contributed to? Why are these important?
   − (a) Research results?
   − (b) Development results (e.g., built capacity of researchers − what are they doing now/different now that they weren't doing before; researchers using the research results to influence policy; other users?)
     Are there linkages here between research results/findings and development results?

6) What have you learned about the implementation of capacity building that might inform similar efforts supported by IDRC in the future (e.g., factors that contributed to/inhibited capacity building outputs/outcomes, a specific combination of activities that you found to be most useful/valuable during the project; factors can include for e.g., internal IDRC context, IDRC program objectives, incentives, other donors, external context)?

Appendix II List of Projects

	PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	PROGRAM INITIATIVE 21	PROGRAM AREA22	REGION	STAFF INTERVIEW	FILE REVIEW	PARTNER INTERVIEW	PROJECT SUB-TYPE
1	101255 RP	Equator Initiative: The Innovative Partnership Awards for Sustainable Development in the Tropics (Phase I)	SUB	ENRM	Global				Application
2	101923 RP	Equator Initiative: Innovative Partnership Awards for Sustainable Development in the Tropics (Phase II)	SUB	ENRM	Global				Application
3	100997 RP	Support to Masters Thesis Research on Gender & Natural Resources	Minga	ENRM	LACRO				Capacity
4	100307 RP	Contribution to Women's Health & Empowerment in India (BAIF)	EcoHealth	ENRM	SARO			X	Capacity
5	003754 RP	International Research Awards in Urban Agriculture: Grants & Management	CFP	ENRM	Global				Award
6	100824 RP	Agropolis Awards for Research on Urban Agriculture	CFP	ENRM	Global				Award
7	100641 RP	Regional Training Course on Urban Agriculture	CFP	ENRM	LACRO				Application
8	101759	Anglophone Regional Course in Urban Agriculture	CFP	ENRM	ESARO				Project Development

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[21] The names/titles of the individual Program Initiatives presented here are those that were part of IDRC's program architecture for the years preceding 2005. The consultants do recognize, however, that the current program architecture includes different individual Program Initiatives.

[22] The Program Areas considered in this study are the three areas that were in use during the study's timeframe (2000-2004), The consultants do recognize, however, that since this study began an additional Program Area has become part of IDRC"s broad programming framework (Innovation, Policy and Science).

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	Project Number	Project Name	Program Initiative 21	Program Area22	Region	Staff Interview	File Review	Partner Interview	Project Sub-Type
	RP								
9	101806 RP	WADIMENA	PlaW	ENRM	MERO				Policy
10	101053 RP	Strategy for National ICT Policy	Pan Asia	ICT4D	ASRO			Document Review; Final Technical Report	Policy
11	003778 RP	Impact of Information Technology in Rural Areas (Phase I)	Pan Asia	ICT4D	SARO			X	Utilization
12	100580 RP	Impact of Information Technology in Rural Areas (Phase II)	Pan Asia	ICT4D	SARO			X	Application
13	004458 RP	Introducing Internet Based Distance Education in Mongolia	Pan Asia	ICT4D	ASRO				Capacity
14	102042 RP	Developing Local Language Computing Capacity in Asia	Pan Asia	ICT4D	ASRO				Capacity
15	100570	ICT Supported Distance Education in Indonesia (PANdora Phase I)	Pan Asia	ICT4D	SARO/ASRO				Background
16	101095 RP	Building Capacity for Social and Gender Analysis in Asia: An Umbrella Program	SUB/CBNRM	ENRM	SARO/ASRO				Capacity
17	101086 RP	Crop Development and Biodiversity Enhancement: Maize in SW China (Phase II)	SUB	ENRM	ASRO				Capacity
18	100875	Sustainable Management of Common	CBNRM	ENRM	ASRO				Capacity

	Project Number	Project Name	Program Initiative 21	Program Area22	Region	Staff Interview	File Review	Partner Interview	Project Sub-Type
	RP	Natural Resources in Mongolia (Phase II)							
19	102064 RP	Electronic Networking Support to the Vietnam Upland Forum	CBNRM	ENRM	ASRO		X		Capacity
20	100876 RP	Community-Based Upland Natural Resource Management	CBNRM	ENRM	ASRO		X		Capacity
21	101931 RP	Preparing for Third Party Involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	PCD	SEP	MERO				Policy
22	102279 RP	From War Termination to Sustainable Peacebuilding	PCD	SEP	Global				Policy
23	102952 RP	Networking and Capacity Building on Gender, Macroeconomics and International Economics – Phase II	MIMAP	SEP	Global				Capacity
24	101595 RP	India Basic Minimal Health Services (Kerala)	MIMAP	SEP	SARO				Application
25	920027 RP	Lead Project	Awards	SID	Global			X	Capacity
26	101090 RP	Workshop on Capacity Building and Competitive Proposal Development in Ecosystem Approaches to Malaria Prevention and Control in Eastern and Southern Africa	EcoHealth	ENRM	ESARO			X	Capacity
27	100622 RP	MIMAP Training and Technical Support (Phase II)	MIMAP	SEP	Global			X	Capacity
28	102267 RP	Developing a Regional Hub for Outcome Mapping in Latin America	Evaluation Unit	Pres Office	LACRO				Capacity
29	RP 100971	Expert / Advisory Service Fund: Palestinian Refugee Secretariat	Middle East	SID	MERO				Capacity

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	PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT NAME	PROGRAM INITIATIVE 21	PROGRAM AREA22	REGION	STAFF INTERVIEW	FILE REVIEW	PARTNER INTERVIEW	PROJECT SUB-TYPE
	(09)	(component 09)							
30	RSP 101653	Training in Fundraising for Development Research Organizations: A Pilot Project	PBDD	PPB	ASRO			X	
31	RSP 101723	Suivi du Séminaire de formation sur l'analyse quantitative de la pauvreté	MIMAP	SEP	WARO			X	
32	RSP 101935	Common Property Conference	Minga	ENRM	Global		X	X	
33	RSP 101163	Environmental Sustainability of Food Security	PLaW	ENRM	ESARO		X	X	
34	RSP 100035	Strengthening Research Skills in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, China	CBNRM	ENRM	ASRO				
35	RSP 101858	EcoHelath Summer Institute Course 2003	EcoHealth	ENRM	LACRO			X	
36	RSP 102525	Genardis: ICTs, Gender and Agriculture: Second Round	Acacia	ICT4D	Sub-Saharan Africa			X	
37	RSP 101992	Strengthening Capacity in Afghanistan	Pan Asia	ICT4D	SARO				
38	RSP 102020	Capacity Building in Fundraising for Action Research in Urban Agriculture	CFP	ENRM	LACRO			X	
39	RSP 101747	Promoting Participatory Plant Breeding	SUB	ENRM	Global				
40	101630 RP	Managing Small-Scale Fisheries (Caribbean)	CBNRM	ENRM	LACRO				
41	101273	Vietnam Economic Research Network (VERN)	TEC	SEP	ASRO			X	

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	Project Number	Project Name	Program Initiative 21	Program Area22	Region	Staff Interview	File Review	Partner Interview	Project Sub-Type
	RP								
42	003591	EEPSEA	Secretariat	SEP	ASRO	Document Review			
43	100985 RP	AERC	TEC	SEP	ESARO	Document Review			Capacity

Appendix III   IDRC Interviews

	Name	Position	Location	PI
1	Connie Freeman	Regional Director	Nairobi	ESARO
2	Martha Melesse	Senior Program Officer	Ottawa	MIMAP/TEC
3	Ronnie Vernooy	Senior Program Specialist	Ottawa	SUB/CBNRM
4	Renald Lafond	(Former) Team Leader	Ottawa	Pan Asia
5	Frank Tulus	Senior Program Officer	New Delhi	Pan Asia
6	Sarah Earl	Program Evaluation Officer	Ottawa	Evaluation Unit
7	Sharmila Mhatre	Senior Program Specialist	Ottawa	MIMAP/GEH
8	Brian Davy	Senior Program Specialist	Ottawa	SUB/CBNRM
9	Lamia el Fattal	Senior Program Officer	Cairo	SUB/PlaW
10	Maria Ng	Senior Program Officer	Singapore	Pan Asia
11	Terry Smutylo	(Former) Director	Ottawa	Evaluation Unit
12	Jean-Michel Labatut	Senior Program Specialist	Ottawa	GEH/EcoHealth
13	Andres Sanchez	Senior Program Officer	Ottawa	EcoHealth
14	Merle Faminow	(Former) Team Leader	Montevideo	Minga
15	Brent Herbert-Copley	Director Program Area	Ottawa	SEP
16	Jean Lebel	Director Program Area	Ottawa	ENRM
17	Lauchlan Munro	Director	Ottawa	Policy & Planning Group
18	Maureen O'Neil	President	Ottawa	IDRC
19	Rich Fuchs	Director Program Area	Ottawa	ICT4D
20	Rohinton Medhora	Vice-President	Ottawa	Programs Branch
21	Roula el Rifai	Senior Program Officer	Ottawa	Middle East Initiatives
22	Eileen Alma	Research Officer	Ottawa	Middle East Initiatives
23	Stephen McGurk	Regional Director	Singapore	ASRO
24	Rita Bowry	Senior Program Officer	Ottawa	Awards
25	Katharine Hay	Evaluation Officer	New Delhi	EcoHealth/Evaluation Unit
26	Mark Redwood	Program Officer	Ottawa	CFP
27	Kristina Taboulchanas	Research Officer	Ottawa	CFP

	Name	Position	Location	PI
28	Alain Berranger	Director	Ottawa	PBDD
29	Luis Navarro	Senior Program officer	Nairobi	PLaW
30	Federico Burone	Regional Director	Montevideo	LACRO
31	Elias Ayuk	Senior Program Officer	Dakar	MIMAP
32	Roberto Bazzani	Senior Program Officer	Montevideo	EcoHealth
33	Laurent Elder	Team Leader	Ottawa	Pan Asia
34	Randy Spence	(Former) Team Leader	Toronto	MIMAP
35	Evan Due	Team Leader	Singapore	MIMAP

Appendix IV Partner Interviews

	PARTNER	PROJECT	PI	LOCATION
1	Dr Ykhanbai	100875	CBNRM	Mongolia
2	Dr. Naveed Malik		Pan Asia	India
3	Dr Yezid Sayigh		PCD	Lebanon
4	Dr. Jarat Chopra		PCD	Jerusalem
5	Dr. Berkes		CBNRM	Canada
6	Beatrice Briggs	102267	Evaluation Unit	Mexico
7	Dr Maria Cuvi		Minga	Ecuador
8	Dr Cristina Seixas		SUB	Brazil
9	Dr Susan Poats		Minga	Ecuador
10	Karim El Jisr		WADIMena (PLaW)	Lebanon
11	Joseph Kassab		WADIMena (PLaW)	Lebanon
12	Dr. Song		SUB	China
13	Dr. Farid Waliyar		Pan Asia (RSP)	India
14	Kristiana Powell		PCD	Canada
15	Dr. Alice Hovorka		CFP	Canada
16	Dr. Sarmad Hussain		Pan Asia	Pakistan
17	Mr George Danso		CFP	Canada
18	Mr Manuel Pulgar-Vidal (SEPIA)		Minga	Peru
19	Mrs Roxana Barrantes (SEPIA)		Minga	Peru
20	Dr. Slim Haddad		MIMAP	Canada
21	Dr. Narayana		MIMAP	India
22	Mr Francisco Cos;		MIMAP	Uruguay
23	Ms Kaia Ambrose		Evaluation Unit	Canada
24	Dr Marielle Dubbeling		CFP	France
25	Dr Lekha Chakraborty		MIMAP	India
26	Dr Diana-Lee Smith		CFP	Kenya
27	Ms Natalia Ortiz		Evaluation Unit	Colombia
28	Mr Saji Khalil		Middle East Initiatives	Palestine
29	Dr Tian Belawati		Pan Asia	Indonesia (via e-mail)
30	Dr Le Van An		CBNRM/SUB (SAGA)	Vietnam
31	Ms Hoang Sen		CBNRM/SUB (SAGA)	Vietnam
32	Vengota Nakro		CBNRM/SUB (SAGA)	India (via e-

	PARTNER	PROJECT	PI	LOCATION
				mail)
33	Chozhule Kikhi		CBNRM/SUB (SAGA)	India (via e-mail)

Appendix V Outcomes Beyond the Individual

Vignette

Establishing an Outcome Mapping Hub in Latin America

Context/Background

- Evaluation Unit needs help to meet demands for OM training in Latin America (no Evaluation staff in regional office; not enough staff in Ottawa to do training all the time; no Evaluation Unit staff speaks Spanish)

- Evaluation Unit, in particular TS, starts working in collaboration with Natalia Ortiz, who is a member of a consultant network (AsRaiz) and is very interested in OM training

- SE meets Beatrice Briggs (an American living/working in Mexico) at a training workshop that both are participating in (Organizational Diagnosis, by Communities at Work – Sam Kaner) in San Francisco; BB heads up a newly established consulting firm in Mexico that specializes in providing services related to facilitation training and consensus building/conflict resolution; SE recognizes how these two areas in particular are fundamentally related to OM facilitation; she also recognizes how BB's organization (IIFAC) and NO's network (AsRaiz) share similar values and are complimentary in nature (IIFAC – facilitation skills/knowledge, AsRaiz – evaluation & development knowledge); BB and NO meet;

- Members/staff of both organizations get training in OM; the training and exchange of knowledge between the two orgs is seen as beneficial to the staff of both orgs;

- Those who are interested in OM continue as trainers/facilitators in OM; one year later – pursuing the institutionalization of this group of people who facilitate/train trainers in OM into LACOM (Latin American Community of Outcome Mapping); proposal to Evaluation Unit currently being developed to seek funding for this process;

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Capacity Building Features/Aspects:

- Training in OM (evaluation methodology and tools) to both facilitate projects in its application as well as training of trainers

- Facilitation skills and knowledge

- Evaluation knowledge and skills – especially development evaluation

- Organizational capacity to provide OM as a service/product to clients

- Recognition of IIFAC (AsRaiz?) by IDRC regional office and other program staff as a source of resources – IDRC staff use IIFAC staff for other services/products; source of work for IIFAC;

Key here – matchmaking ability of SE to bring the different actors together; **peer-to-peer learning** aspects of capacity building/capacity development; in this instance, IDRC **contributed to capacity building** both **directl**y (training others in evaluation methodology/tools – OM) and **indirectly**, by funding a group of people (via a particular organization) to do the training themselves for the benefit of others (beneficiaries).

Some Issues:

- Disbursement of money by GAD a problem; very long time; process and procedures not always clear to the partner(s)
  - Could be an issue related to **project management systems not in sync** with process oriented development results expected from projects
  - This issue also brought up in a couple other interviews with partners

- **Sustainability** of the institutionalization of OM in Latin America – current solution is to take 10% of fees/payments for services by LACOM and put back into LACOM; however, still a project based approach (by IDRC) to a long-term process; this issue also came up with others (i.e., the issue of having a project-based approach to a long-term problem – not necessarily sustainable; if IDRC shifts its funding priorities or programming structure – as it did recently – then the capacity building activities being carried out are not necessarily sustainable.

- **Replication** of establishing a regional hub: is this a project that can be replicated in other regions or is the success of this project based on the context (Latin America) and the people involved (Bea and Natalia)?
  - Perhaps these two issues are for IDRC to consider for the future? In terms of CB projects:
    - How conducive is a project-based approach to capacity building activities in terms of sustainability?
    - What ingredients do CB projects need to be replicated/scaled-up? What is it about a CB project that makes it replicable?

These issues are important considerations for IDRC managers and staff who want to know "what works" and "what doesn't work" since the same project will not be the same in a different context, with different actors, in a different timeframe, within a different programming structure. You won't necessarily have the same results.

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Appendix VI Example of Performance Data Framework

The following table was developed as an example of a potential framework for recording and tracking the types of results being achieved by IDRC projects at the different levels discussed in this paper. The challenge is to define potentially common language without inhibiting the creativity and flexibility that characterizes capacity building work at the Centre.

TARGET FOCUS /LEVEL	PERFORMANCE DATA FRAMEWORK			
	INPUT	PROCESS CAPACITIES BEING DEVELOPED	OUTPUT	OUTCOMES
State/ Institutional	Funds for research intended to influence policy Other resources	Collaborative arrangements encouraging policy dialog around research issue	Policy research reports	Policy change
Network	Funds for coordination and secretariat Other resources	Conference support; meetings; communication IDRC legitimates process of getting together	Collaborative research	Multidisciplinary research teams working on key development problems
Organizational	Equipment purchased for data entry & statistical analysis Other resources	Organizational provision of incentives for supporting use of equipment for information needs	Organizational ability to manage & report on data	Provision of reliable data leads to widespread use for decision-making
Individual	Education and training funds Other resources	Individual learning to use technology to solve research problems Researchers protected by IDRC involvement	Skilled staff engaged and producing research	Use of research reports by target audience
Societal (Users)	Funds to use results Other resources	Engagement participation in research		Use research results