

# IDRC

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE

## MEETING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a public corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems they face. Support is directed toward developing an indigenous research capacity to sustain policies and technologies that developing countries need to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies.



IDRC supports research in three broad areas: Social and Economic Equity; Environment and Natural Resource Management; and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Development. As the few examples below illustrate, these broad avenues of research support the United Nations Millennium Goals both directly and indirectly.

### Halving Extreme Poverty and Hunger

IDRC believes that food security and sound environmental management go hand in hand. For instance, our programs devoted to community-based natural resource management seek to enhance crop yields in a sustainable manner, while enhancing the livelihoods poor communities derive from forests and from indigenous knowledge. In Cambodia's Kampot province, for example, the re-growth of forests has increased nutrient flows to neighbouring rice paddies, raising yields by 1-1.5 tons. Because 50% of the world's absolute poor now live in urban areas, IDRC also supports research on urban agriculture (UA) as a means for poor men and women to increase household food

security and to generate income. UA can also play an important role in environmental and public health by treating, re-using, and managing both wastewater and solid urban waste.

And because hunger and poverty are intimately linked to economic and social policies at the macro and sectoral levels, IDRC supports research to understand these links and target policies effectively. A first step is mapping poverty and its components. Another is to link changes in these to various combinations of macroeconomic and sectoral policies. IDRC's Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies program has been doing this in over 20 developing countries since 1990.

### Achieving Universal Primary Education

IDRC seeks to support national education efforts by developing means of applying information and communication technologies (ICTs) to redress inequities in access to education. A project supported by the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas, for instance, provides refurbished computers and training to Colombian classrooms. IDRC's Acacia program supports such projects as SchoolNet South Africa and Mozambique — nationwide networks that enhance learning opportunities for students, teachers, and the surrounding community via the Internet. And because the lack of content in local languages is a major impediment, students in Laos are developing content in the Lao language as part of their homework, thus helping to bring the benefits of ICTs to their elders while learning themselves.



## Empowering Women

Although the concern for gender equity is included in all of IDRC's research activities, many projects directly target issues that will lead to improvements in women's lives. One example is the work of the BAIF Development Research Foundation, which is implementing a large health and empowerment program for women and girls in six states in India. The Gender Unit at IDRC also supports projects on pressing and specific gender and development issues, and holds a multi-year research competition. The current topic is Decentralization and Women's Rights in sub-Saharan Africa.

## Reducing Morbidity and Mortality

A large part of IDRC programming to reduce the burden of disease focuses on the links between health, governance, and equity. This is the basis of the highly acclaimed Tanzania Essential Health Interventions Project (TEHIP), which has shown that decentralized government service delivery and accurate information can lead to better targeted health expenditures and thus to significant improvements in population health. The tools and approaches developed through TEHIP are now serving as a model for decentralized health planning throughout Tanzania, with possibilities of replication elsewhere.

IDRC also focuses its attention on the potential for improving human health by better managing ecosystems. In Mexico, for instance, researchers set about to eliminate the use of environmentally harmful DDT in malaria control programs. By addressing factors that affect malaria's spread — humans, mosquitoes, and the local environment in which the parasite persists — Mexico was able to abandon DDT use and significantly reduce cases of malaria in the country.

## Ensuring Environmental Sustainability

This goal is fundamental to many of IDRC's programs. For example, the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity program promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, particularly genetic resources that are vital to communities for food security, nutrition, and primary health care. Water is another important focal area and over the past decades, IDRC has supported much

research on water demand management in water-scarce areas such as the Middle East. Most experts in the region believe that water demand management represents a way forward — one that can help improve the quality of life for people living in the region. Over the past several years, IDRC has pursued this option through a number of projects as well as four meetings organized by the Water Demand Management Forum. These meetings attracted more than 500 decision-makers from 11 countries and involved 25 partner organizations.

## Creating a Global Partnership for Development

Improving global governance and international economic relations is central to several IDRC programs. The Trade, Employment and Competitiveness program, for instance, has created networks of scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in several regions who come together and create the analytical basis on which sound trade and related domestic policies can be made. Through the G24 Research Program and related initiatives, IDRC supports research on issues related to international finance, trade, and the work of the international financial institutions and multilateral agencies, thus providing the basis for the sound participation of developing countries in international negotiations.

IDRC also works to raise awareness of development issues in Canada in partnership with both civil society organizations and government agencies.

## For further information, contact

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