

Very early in its life, IDRC's Governors realized that they had to be selective about its priorities. They decided, therefore, that IDRC should emphasize that section of its mandate which calls for developing countries to be assisted "to build up the research capabilities, the innovative skills, and the institutions required to solve their problems." With this focus, the Centre's approach has been to seek to ensure that the need to conduct research, the capacity to undertake research, and the research process itself are melded into a whole in developing countries.

Whatever final assessments are made of IDRC-funded research, the Centre's activities have already resulted in establishing a place for research in the development process. This is a remarkable achievement, because in many developing countries the research community has been considered remote from the hurly burly of pain and growth. In some countries, the research community itself sometimes gave the impression that it was desperately trying to substantiate the accusation. IDRC is helping to change these attitudes and orientations.

As a complement to its primary focus, it also sought the assistance of Canadian researchers where such assistance was expected to enhance the work of developing country researchers. As of last September, IDRC had funded 67 development-related research projects in Canada. Approximately half were in agriculture and related sciences. Thus, cooperation has been established in many fields between universities in Canada and institutions in developing countries. Several Canadian scientists have been associated with a network of developing country projects over a long period. Some Centre staff have been located at Canadian universities, and young developing country researchers have been able to improve their skills through fellowship programs in Canada.

While the Centre's primary focus remains unchanged, the opportunity for greater involvement by the Canadian research community in international development and cooperation has now been provided. At UNCSTD (United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development), in August 1979, Canada responded affirmatively to the proposal for cooperative programs called for in the Vienna Programme of Action by announcing that "the Government of Canada has decided to adopt a policy encouraging the application of our domestic research and development capabilities to the solution of problems of the developing countries. The Government has specifically stipulated that such Canadian resources should

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wherever possible be applied through cooperative or joint research and development ventures with organizations in developing countries or regions with the aim of enhancing their indigenous capabilities."

Later, the Government invited IDRC to serve as the focal point of the new activity. After careful deliberation, the Centre's Board of Governors accepted the invitation, on the understanding that the proposed new activity would be additional to established program activity, but should maintain the principle of responsiveness to developing-country needs.

EXPLORING RESEARCH LINKS

On December 8 and 9, 1980, IDRC and Simon Fraser University co-sponsored a seminar on "Research for Third World Development", in Vancouver, Canada. The aims were to provide the research community in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia with information on IDRC, and to share information on the two provinces' actual and potential research capacity for collaboration with Third World research institutions.

Divided into workshops, the more than 150 participants from universities, colleges, government and private research centres explored research carried out in various agricultural areas such as aquaculture, postproduction systems, and farming systems; in information-sharing; in training for Third World research; in social sciences; and in health fields such as fertility regulation methods and rural health care delivery.

Similar seminars are being planned for the Atlantic provinces and Quebec later in 1981.

A Cooperative Programs Unit has been set up as part of the IDRC President's office, and preparatory work has been going on so that research linkages could be set in place as soon as funds are available in April 1981. The figure of \$Cdn 12 million mentioned by Senator Martial Asselin at UNCSTD was a target toward which, one presumes, the Government of Canada will move. The amount available for cooperative research projects in 1981/82 will be relatively modest: \$1 million.

The opportunity for the Canadian research community to be directly involved in development-oriented research arises from the assurance of annual funding earmarked for this purpose. The challenge to the Canadian research community is to ensure that collaborative research is truly collaborative in scope, substance, and form. The advantage to developing countries is that they will have an avenue through which their requirements can be matched with Canadian expertise. To ensure that these strands are interwoven, the new activity will not be restricted to the Centre's established program areas, but could be extended to other areas.

Proposals for cooperative research have already been made by institutions in, for instance, St. Lucia-Barbados, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Malaysia. Some have established contact with Canadian counterparts, and their proposals have been jointly formulated. In other cases, developing country institutions have stated the nature of the problem they wish to address, described both the availability and the inadequacy of local staff and facilities, and have asked whether they could be helped to find Canadian partners. Canadian institutions could also take the initiative, in which case it will be IDRC's responsibility to determine whether Canadian and developing country perceptions are compatible, and whether the project envisaged will be designed and carried out in a truly cooperative manner.

William Tossell says in *Partnership in development* (see following article): "Most of the scientific capacity, and in particular most of the very specialized expertise and equipment, existing in the world today is located in developed countries. An important question is the extent to which this expertise should be utilized to assist developing countries . . . At present it is underutilized." At least as far as Canadians are concerned, that situation can now change, and Canadian researchers can be more directly involved in processes that can be as exciting as they are professionally rewarding. □

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