

# Keeping pace with city growth

**V**ery early in the history of the IDRC a decision was made to concentrate research support largely in the rural areas of developing countries. Seventy-five percent of the people of the Third World live outside the cities; most of them are subsistence farmers and their families; most live in small villages lacking even the basic amenities such as schools, health care, water supply, and sanitation. The decision to apply the major thrust of the Centre's research support to improve the lives of these people was not a difficult one. But this decision did not mean that the cities would be entirely ignored. Rather the Centre has supported urban research projects where they relate to the complex interaction between city and countryside.

Many of the cities of the Third World are growing faster than their ability to provide services. And as more and more people move in from the countryside in search of a better life, the problem is compounded — for the city depends to a large extent on its rural hinterland. A better balance between urban and rural living has to be found. Thus the Centre has funded studies of rural-urban migration patterns to find out why people move from the countryside to the city, and what happens to them when they do. Many are unable to find homes, and end up in mushrooming squatter settlements. So the Centre also supports research to improve living conditions here, and other studies aimed at providing sites and services, better low-cost housing, food and transportation systems, and employment opportunities. Some of these projects and their implications are examined in the following pages. □

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