

A photograph of a group of women and a child at a well in a rural setting. A large wooden beam is suspended over the well, with ropes and pulleys attached. One woman is pulling the rope, and another is holding a yellow plastic container. A young child in a colorful dress is in the foreground. The background shows a simple building and trees.

Long-Term Solutions for a Short-Term World

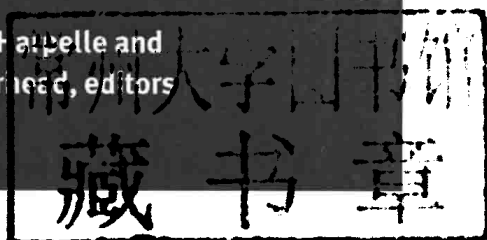
Canada and Research
Development

Ronald N. Harpelle and
Bruce Muirhead, editors

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**Long-Term Solutions
for a Short-Term World**

Acknowledgements

This book is an offshoot of a project to write a history of the International Development Research Centre. Research on the IDRC History Project began in 2006 and over a three-year period we had the opportunity to meet scientists from around the world. We would like to thank all the contributors to this book for their efforts in making the conference they initially attended and this publication a success. The conference was entitled “Canada and Research for Development: Past, Present and Future,” and it was organized with support from IDRC. With the support of Lauchlan Munro, IDRC vice-president, Corporate Strategy and Regional Management, and former president of IDRC, Maureen O’Neil, we were able to bring together this diverse group of researchers whose work has made a difference.

Along with encouragement from a number of other IDRC staff, we benefited from the support of the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo and staff at Wilfrid Laurier University Press. In particular, we would like to thank Rob Kohlmeier and Ryan Chynces through the publication process. Our anonymous reviewers provided a great deal of assistance in helping us corral ideas and better connect the submissions, which were written from a wide variety of social, ethnic, and political contexts. A great many thanks go to Laura Murray, who helped us edit and format generally pull the book together. We are indebted to our partners, Kelly Saxberg and Sandi Bair, who not only served as sounding

boards for many ideas that did not see the light of day but who lived and relived the “drama” of many of the decisions that went into this book. We cannot hope to repay them for their patience and the sacrifices they made to see us through the entire IDRC History Project.

The International Development Research Centre and Research for Development

One of the most fascinating and inspiring aspects of international development is the dedication of individuals who are engaged finding solutions to the problems faced by the world's poor. In this age of globalization, we are never far from those that plague developing countries. From the extremes of poverty experienced by the majority of the world's population to the wealthiest of the wealthy, the problem of development affects us all because it is the single most important factor in the future of our world. Every other pressing global issue, from climate change to the civil unrest that engulfs much of the planet, can be said to centre on the problems of development. Although government agencies and celebrities are often seen as being at the forefront of the fight to assist the world's poor, there are thousands of people engaged in finding solutions.

An important group is the scientists who conduct research for development. They provide the foundation for the solutions proposed by the World Bank, Bob Geldof, Bill Gates, and others. *Long-Term Solutions for a Short-Term World* introduces some of the individuals whose dedication to research lights the elusive pathways to development. The book examines two important and understudied issues: the importance of research in

international development and the work of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

In early 2006, Bruce Muirhead and Ron Harpelle were commissioned to write a history of IDRC, a small Canadian Crown corporation that is far better known among researchers in the developing world than it is at home. *IDRC: 40 Years of Ideas, Innovation, and Impact* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010) focuses on the political and administrative side of the story. Like all research projects, outcomes develop over time, and one of the supplements to our work is this collection of essays on the practitioners of research for development. The essays that follow tend to be descriptive, because our enquiries into the history of IDRC required an understanding of the evolutionary process of specific research projects with clear examples of how various kinds of research is conducted in the field.

As part of our research for the project we were tasked with travelling to IDRC's six regional offices, where we conducted interviews with, among others, dozens of past and present recipients of Canadian support for social science and scientific research for development. This kind of research is directed at immediate problems faced by societies in poor countries. Some is at the macro level, focused on regional, continental, and even global challenges, but most of the research we were exposed to had as its primary focus the amelioration of general living conditions or, in its more ambitious or farsighted characterization, the alleviation of poverty among the world's poor. Research for development is the search for long-term solutions to problems that persist despite the rapid changes taking place as the world accelerates into the twenty-first century.

Our interviews for the IDRC history focused on past support from this uniquely Canadian institution and its often overlooked, but highly successful, track record of building capacity among researchers in the developing world. However, we also took on the task of determining what kinds of research were being conducted at the present time; we visited laboratories and offices of individuals addressing long-term solutions to the ongoing challenges to development. Knowledge is the single most important means for a country to achieve development goals, and the monopoly on scientific knowledge enjoyed by advanced industrial countries such as Canada does not lend itself easily to solving the perplexing problems associated with poverty in the developing world.

Long-Term Solutions for a Short-Term World results from a conference held in September 2008 at the Centre for International Governance Inno-

vation (CIGI) in Waterloo, Ontario. It was held over two days with an invited audience of researchers, students, and representatives from funding agencies and NGOs. The objective of the conference was to bring together a representative group of researchers to speak about their individual work as a means of conducting a cross-disciplinary and multinational dialogue on development. The presenters were invited because each had received critical acclaim for their work and because each represented one of six areas of research that provided the conference with a broad spectrum of issues and approaches to discuss. Our focus was on water, women, politics, health, information and communication technologies, and the BRIC's emerging economies. These themes coincided with a six-part documentary film series called *Citizens of the World* (directed by Kelly Saxberg) that grew out of meetings with some of the most dynamic development researchers of our time. In a sense, this book is a companion to the film series, but it's different, too, because we have allowed the researchers to present their own accounts of meeting development challenges head-on.

While international development is often dominated by policy-makers who create models that provide answers to the problem of poverty, the individuals highlighted in this book are the people who shape fields of research. As such, this book is not written as a challenge to current orthodoxies on development, nor does it claim to provide a clear path forward. We leave the debates about the literature on development and the grand solutions to those who wish to situate themselves within a broader and more critical context. *Long-Term Solutions for a Short-Term World* is about research from the perspective of the researchers themselves. None of the participants in the conference or the contributors to this book would ever claim a monopoly on knowledge about specific challenges to development, because their commitment is to research and making the small advances that build toward lasting change.

Our book is, therefore, inspired by the stories of people who have dedicated their lives to finding solutions to some of the challenges that confront the world's poor. Approaching various problems with what were often considered unorthodox approaches, each of the authors in this volume displays a dedication to research for development combined with self-sacrifice that merits our admiration. The authors of the following essays are not only accomplished leaders in their respective fields but people who have chosen paths that often bring them into conflict with authorities and systems that exist as obstacles to development. These are people who have

taken risks (sometimes dangerous ones) to secure a better future for citizens of the Global South. They enjoy international stature for their work, but they toil in relative obscurity because theirs is research to benefit marginalized people. Some of these researchers focus on issues that are global or that have global implications, while others focus on issues that are local and immediate. Together their stories offer a cross-section of the kinds of research for development that is taking place across the Global South.

The researchers featured in the pages that follow have chosen to remain in their country of origin. These are individuals with qualifications from some of the best universities in the world who work for the benefit of their countries. They cannot be criticized for the sacrifices they have made or for not having read the latest literature that is generally published in English in journals that are increasingly controlled by large commercial publishing companies that are not in the business of providing universal access to information. These researchers also cannot afford to pay to have their work published with these same publishers, and this puts limits on their ability to stand out in the academic world or research. They are citizens of the world who are working in the field on problems that face humanity.

IDRC has made a reputation for itself by funding researchers with potential. Recipients of IDRC support are often younger scientists whose first big break comes from this little known Crown corporation. IDRC has led the way in supporting research in non-industrialized countries in order to increase the competitiveness of researchers in poor countries and help pave the way for a more sustainable scientific foundation among national institutions. Capacity-building is a slow process and, like science, the results often raise more questions than they answer. The researchers in this volume exemplify the success of IDRC; they have been given the tools to devote their attention to problems that plague the world.

This book serves to present a Canadian alternative to the global challenge of assisting developing countries in their search for solutions to the problems they face in the twenty-first century. The model for this approach is the International Development Research Centre. As Rohinton Medhora, one of its vice-presidents, has often pointed out, IDRC is in some ways like a university, an NGO, and a government department. Like a university it is intellectually curious and committed to scientific excellence; like an NGO it strongly believes in its mission and in the autonomy needed to carry it out; and like a government department it uses public funds and is publicly accountable for its actions and enjoys the confidence and protec-

tion of that official status. Without this hybridization the IDRC would not be what it is and would probably not have enjoyed the success it has.

Participants at the CIGI conference were invited to make personalized presentations that would provide the audience with insight into the experiences of researchers who have focused on some of the most important development questions of our time. The chapters in this book are written by people who have intimate knowledge of the challenges faced by individuals and communities in some of the poorest countries in the world. Their work does not always grab headlines or command the attention of governments, but it makes a vital contribution to our understanding of the many pathways to development and the improvement of the general conditions for people in the Global South. The authors are from several different regions of the world and they specialize in different fields of study, but they have one important thing in common — each of the research experiences described in this book was funded, in whole or in part, by Canada's International Development Research Centre.

The first chapter is written by Ron Harpelle, a specialist in Latin American history with a background in international development. His association with IDRC dates from 1998, when he was awarded a Canada and the World Grant to undertake a study of the West Indian community of Central America. Since then he has taught the history of international development and created course materials that help students understand the constraints placed on non-industrial societies around the world. Chapter One offers an overview of international development, looking at how it evolved in the aftermath of the collapse of European colonialism and within the context of the post-1945 world. Harpelle places a special emphasis on the history of Canada's role in development assistance and why the Canadian approach is in many ways different from that of other countries.

In Chapter Two, Bruce Muirhead offers a summary of the history of the International Development Research Centre from its inception in 1970 to the present. Bruce Muirhead is a professor of history and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo. His current research is on the history of the International Development Research Centre, and he has undertaken the writing of a history of Canadian official development assistance policy from 1945 to 1984 with a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. He continues to work on the topic of the development of Canadian foreign economic policy in the 1960s and '70s. The story of IDRC is

important because it is a uniquely Canadian approach to development problems, which reflects Muirhead's work.

Dipak Gyawali is an activist academic who is a member of the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology as well as the research director of the Nepal Water Conservation Foundation and the editor of its interdisciplinary journal, *Water Nepal*. His research interests centre on the society–technology interface and deals primarily with water and energy issues. He was Nepal's Minister for Water Resources in 2002–3 and is currently vice-chair of the technical committee of UN's Third World Water Assessment. In Chapter Three, Gyawali offers an analysis of the difference between development research and development consultancy and raises critical questions about the difference between the two. He focuses on the problem of imported solutions that do not address the home-grown needs of the countries being “developed.”

Chapter Four, by Zoubida Charrouf, who is a professor at the Mohammed V University in Rabat, and Dominique Guillaume, a professor of medicinal chemistry at the University of Reims Champagne–Ardenne, is about a fascinating research journey that saw the creation of a network of Argan oil-producing co-operatives run by women in Morocco. The efforts of these scientists to study the oil's properties has fed into the fight against desertification, resulting from the empowerment of poor women in the countryside through the valorization of a traditional commodity.

Chapter Five is by Rita Giacaman, a professor of public health at the Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, Viet Nguyen-Gillham, who has a background in social work and psychotherapy, and Yoke Rabaia, who conducts research with the mental health unit of the Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University. Their chapter is about the study of trauma among Palestinian youth. Their work highlights an aspect of life under military occupation that is overlooked in other efforts to find a path toward state creation in Palestine.

Dr. Oumar Cissé is a civil engineer who holds an M.A. in environmental studies and a PhD in management from the University of Montreal. Since 1997, he has served as executive secretary of the African Institute for Urban Management (IAGU), where he has led a group of researchers in a study of the Mbeubeuss garbage dump and landfill in Dakar. In Chapter Six Cissé explains how his work has served to bring the daily challenges of some of the world's poorest people to national discussions of waste management in Senegal.

Chapter Seven, by Clotilde Fonseca, the Costa Rican Minister of Science and Technology and the former director and founder of the Programa de Informática Educativa de Costa Rica, tells an important story of bringing e-learning to remote regions of Central America. While Costa Rica was spared much of the turmoil of war and dislocation that characterized the region in the last decades of the twentieth century, the challenges of introducing digital technology and delivering education are daunting. Nevertheless, through Fonseca's efforts, individuals who would otherwise have been unable to obtain certain kinds of education and skills are now enjoying the prospect of a brighter future.

Palmira Ventosilla is an expert on tropical disease vectors from the Alexander von Humboldt Tropical Medicine Institute in Lima. In Chapter Eight she tells how a simple means of combating the spread of malaria was developed and how she was able to raise the awareness of an entire community, through its youth, about health issues. The means to this end was an educational program that has seen dozens of young people participate in making their community a healthier place in which to live. Their efforts to combat malaria have also led the community to a better understanding of other diseases and the negative effects of pesticide use.

Chapter Nine is by Heloise Emdon. She leads Acacia, an International Development Research Centre program that works with African partners to apply information and communication technologies to Africa's social and economic development. Emdon brings many years of experience in journalism and development in Southern Africa. Her chapter tells the story of connecting Africans to the world and how recent technological changes have served to bring millions of people into the global mainstream.

The last chapter is a story of how support for research for development has long-lasting political implications. Diego Piñeiro is a rural sociologist who is the former dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universidad de la Republica, in Uruguay. In Chapter Ten he writes about his experiences and those of his colleagues under the military dictatorship in Uruguay from 1973 to 1985. Piñeiro discusses the role played by IDRC in maintaining research capacity in Uruguay and elsewhere in the Southern Cone region by supporting scientists who otherwise would have fled into exile or been prevented from continuing their investigations due to their pariah status as left-wing intellectuals living under right-wing dictatorships.

Long-Term Solutions for a Short-Term World was designed to engage international development specialists as well as students and the general

public. Further information about the studies contained in this collection can be found online or in print. These chapters represent a small sample of the dynamic research currently being conducted in the developing world. The authors provide inspiration to those who are looking for examples of research that matters, and they provide insight into how scientists from different fields engage with problems that are common to poor people everywhere. Each of the following stories helps put a human face on research for development while at the same time explaining different facets of scientific investigation for the benefit of humanity.

— *Ron Harpelle and Bruce Muirhead*

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The Underpinnings of Canadian Development Assistance

Ronald Harpelle

Defence, diplomacy, and development are the three pillars of Canadian foreign policy, and their use is in direct response to the needs or objectives of the Canadian government in a given country or region. Diplomacy and development work hand in hand to assist poor countries in strengthening their capacity to engage in democratization, human rights, rule of law, and public sector performance and accountability. Assistance in these key areas comes in many different forms, but support through Canada's Official Development Assistance (ODA) for research by scientists in poor countries to assist them in finding solutions to problems that confront their societies is an idea that was pioneered in Canada by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Capacity-building through research funding serves to strengthen and protect democratic institutions and civil society groups while at the same time providing tangible benefits to society as a whole. This investment in research has produced dividends throughout the non-industrialized world and has helped ensure that Canada is at the forefront of supporting research for development. A review of Canada's evolution as a donor country reveals ways in which the Canadian role in international development has been shaped by a history of accommodation.