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*The IDRC Alumni provides opportunities for former IDRC employees to maintain personal and professional links, and supports continuing dialogue on development issues.*

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## ***Bulletin***

No. 71

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### **Where are they now?**

Creative Geniuses at Work



In March 2023, Arun Abraham and Marc Van Ameringen had a cozy reunion over Swiss fondue in Geneva, seeing each other for the first time in over 25 years! Arun is a Climate and Environment Finance Specialist and has founded Natural Capital Advisors Ltd. (UK) and Marc is Co-Founder and Director with Future Food Platform. They did talk a little business - the creation of a potential natural capital fund for nature-positive agri-food enterprises.

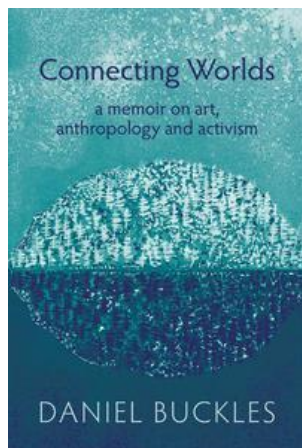
## Transitions, a play by Ron Davies

Ron Davies, who worked in Information Sciences in the 1980s and went on to work for the European Parliament in Brussels, is an emerging playwright who has twice won the National One-Act Playwriting Competition.

His new play "Transitions" (winner of the 2023 Hamilton Fringe New Play Contest) deals with three generations of family members -- an ailing grandfather, a beleaguered mother and a transgender teen -- who struggle to understand the life challenges the others face... and to deal with their own. Hamilton Fringe juror Jordan M. Burns called it "an incredibly important piece" and "deeply relatable." "Transitions" is premiering at the Arts Court Theatre during the Ottawa Fringe Festival June 15-25, 2023. More info is available at [transitionstheplay.ca](http://transitionstheplay.ca). Tickets are available at [ottawafringe.com/shows/transitions](http://ottawafringe.com/shows/transitions).

Check out Ron's website: <https://ron-davies.ca/>

## Connecting Worlds, by Daniel Buckles



The artist, anthropologist and community activist Daniel Buckles shows how connection to self, others, and nature can become the catalyst for an engaged life.

The bush lifestyle of the 1970s Yukon, exposure to the complex culture of Mexico, and a battle with cancer at the age of thirty-two prompted the author to work with people living on the edge: Honduran peasants inventing new agricultural technologies for hillside agriculture; landless Bangladeshi women gleaning nutrient-rich food from their surroundings; small religious communities standing in solidarity at the centre of disaster relief efforts in the Philippines and Burkina Faso; grassroots organizations fighting to protect urban forests in Ottawa, Canada.

This story of personal discovery and engaged research offers a window into real-life social struggles and life's key challenges and professional choices. Richly illustrated with professional photography and paintings, Connecting Worlds shows how to make a difference, from the inside out. Purchase as an ebook: <https://books2read.com/u/47WNM7>

Welcome, New Members!

The Alumni Association welcomed the following new members since January, 2023.

Khaled Fourati  
Peter Taylor  
Karen McAllister  
Dominique Charon  
Tracy Millar

Michelle Hibler  
Amélie Bélanger  
Ron Davies  
Donna O'Grady  
André Roberge  
Manon Thérien  
Wendy Storey  
Roula El-Rifai  
Carolyn Switzer  
Véronique Duvieusart  
Susan Joeke  
Annie Wesley  
Renaud De Plaen  
Claudie Gosselin  
Alison Scott  
Pascale Vaudrin  
Silke Reichrath  
Jane Ann Wyma  
Stephen John

Spread the word! Whether you are a former employee or a 20+ year veteran still working for IDRC, becoming a member of the Alumni Association keeps you connected to our global community.

Julie Gohier, Social Media Assistant Administrator

Julie Gohier will join the Alumni team as Assistant Administrator of the Facebook Group, working with Administrator Shaun Bona.

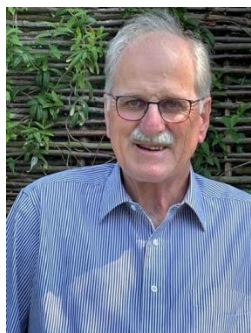
Julie started her career at IDRC as a student, following her father's footsteps (Gilles Lessard, Director of Forestry 1971-1987). IDRC is where she met and later married Marc Gohier, who worked at IDRC for 34 years.

After almost 30 years at IDRC, Julie is currently a Senior Financial Analyst in the Budget and Financial Management unit.

Julie very much enjoys gardening and loves the outdoors, especially walking in the forest with her dog. Photography is also a hobby, especially taking close-up photos of her flowers.

Welcome, Julie.

Executive Committee Member Profile: Carlos Seré



Carlos is an active member of the Alumni Executive and kindly agreed to be profiled in this issue of the Bulletin! We will continue to feature our Execs in future issues. Carlos worked at IDRC from 1994 to 2001 and is perhaps best remembered as Regional Director of the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office in Montevideo, Uruguay. In his own words, Carlos fills us in on his life at IDRC and beyond.

After having worked for the AFNS Division as a consultant for some time, I was hired by Tony Tillett, the LACRO RD at the time, as program officer to look after a number of projects in the region. IDRC was going through a round of downsizing and a number of AFNS program officers based in the region had been let go. I was hired on a ten-month contract to manage these orphaned projects.

In 1996 Tony left the Centre and IDRC President Keith Bezanson asked me to become the Acting RD and subsequently fully appointed me. I led the LACRO office through some rather turbulent times, including the downsizing of local staff, moving to new premises and being at one point asked by the Board and management to close the regional office. Upon returning to Montevideo, I had the tough task of informing the staff of the Board's decision. Luckily, this was reversed a few days later.

Auditors' visits, wardrobe malfunctions, visits from headquarters were always a highlight. Auditors were known to like to audit our books in January, the peak of the summer season in the Southern hemisphere and the main vacation period in Uruguay. LACRO staff particularly enjoyed the timing of these audit visits.

Once, Vice-President Pierre Beemans came on an official visit to Uruguay and the regional office. His luggage didn't make it and he had an appointment to see a high government official the same day. Given my height (six foot six) I immediately rushed home and got him a coat and a tie.

President Maureen O'Neil visited the office and the region several times during my tenure as RD. Two visits are particularly alive in my memory: a courtesy call to see the Uruguayan President Jorge Batlle, and a trip to Ecuador and Guatemala with a delegation of the IDRC Board. Besides looking after the project visits, I faced a number of practical challenges. While waiting to board our flight in Quito, one person lost her ticket and boarding pass. It was later found in the airport washroom. Upon arrival in Guatemala, we found out that one person had left her suitcases at the hotel in Ecuador. In Guatemala I had to help a Board member shop for a dress to attend a reception at the Canadian Ambassador's residence.

Beyond IDRC, global leadership in agricultural research, working as a PO and later an RD at IDRC was a key factor in my career from being an agricultural economist involved in international agricultural research, to becoming a research funder and manager. This experience was a valuable stepping stone for my next career move as Director General of the International Livestock Research Institute in 2001. After two five-year terms at the head of this CGIAR centre, I joined the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome as Associate Vice-President for Strategy and Knowledge Management. After two years I returned to the CGIAR as part-time semi-retired advisor to the director of Bioversity International. In 2018 my wife and I moved to Bonn for our retirement.

I am still marginally involved with development research as a senior fellow with the Centre for Development Research (ZEF) of the University of Bonn. Other interests include sailing, hiking, beekeeping, and gardening.

## In Memoriam



**Shaukat Ali McDoom**  
**1933-2023**

Born in 1933, Shaukat passed away peacefully on 9 February 2023. A former member of IDRC's Communications Division, Shaukat lived a full life and liked nothing more than being in the company of his family, often waking up early on Sundays to watch his beloved Formula 1 races and tuning into the news to stay on top of global events. He particularly favoured keeping up with developments in Guyana, his birthplace.

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Wish to support the IDRC Alumni Association? Contributions can be made annually or over a three-year period. SINCE SEPTEMBER 1, 2023, the contributions are the following: 1 year \$30 / 2 years \$55 / 3 years \$75

Cheques payable to the **IDRC Alumni Association**. Payments can be made by interact Finance.idrc-alumni.anciens-crdi@bell.net

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