



Summary IDRC Alumni Research Awards (2007-2022)

Starting in 2007 the IDRC Alumni has partnered with the IDRC Regional Office honoured at the annual Alumni Members' Reception to provide support for younger researchers. The Alumni's contribution depends on the funds available from Memberships and gifts and is generously matched from Regionally Administered Funds (RAF).

SARO (2007)

SARO made a grant to the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (Sri Lanka) to be used to support the RCSS' annual *Mahub ul-Haq Award*, for collaborative research by young South Asians, each from a different country for joint research on non-traditional security issues with relevance to contemporary South Asia. Six awards were made.

The \$3,000 donated by the Alumni was been matched with \$9,000 from SARO's RAF.

MERO (2008)

MERO awarded the Economic Research Forum (ERF) a grant in April 2009 to support the Forum's effort to enhance research capacity in the MENA region. The focus was on environmental economics, an area where research capacity in the region is weak.

ERF used the funding to assign mentors/advisors to young researchers working with ERF on the IDRC-supported project, *Environmental Economics Research Competition in the MENA Region*. One set of advisors was tasked with: a) Providing guidance on research methodology; b) Helping with the interpretation of the results and findings; c) Ensuring the coherence of the write-up or papers; d) Assisting in devising a dissemination strategy of the final output; and, e) Reviewing first drafts and providing technical comments on them. Advisors were drawn from Canada, France and the USA. Five students from Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Gaza, studying in the region or abroad were assisted through this part of the award.

A second set of advisors was supported to guide a second component of the project, multiple papers focused on assessing incentives embodied in environmental regulations in a variety of countries and sectors in the region.

The \$3,000 from the IDRC Alumni was matched with \$8,000 from MERO's RAF.

LACRO (2009)

LACRO awarded the *Seminario Permanente de Investigación Agraria (SEPIA)* to support a *Competition for Peruvian Young Professionals*. A call for proposal at www.sepia.org.pe was so well received that the deadline was extended to July 1, 2010. There will be three fellowship for young researchers who are senior students or

recent alumni from public universities located outside Lima. The call also includes a comprehensive diffusion campaign, focused on public universities. Proposals will be reviewed a specialist committee to select three fellows who will participate in a workshop, visit research centers in Lima and receive tutoring.

The \$2000 from the IDRC Alumni was matched by \$10,300 from LACRO's RAF.

ASRO (2010)

In ASRO a group of "graduates" of IDRC's *Environment Economics Program for Southeast Asia (EEPSEA)* have established a *pro-bono* Think Tank, *Economics for Nature*, to extend what they have learned from the IDRC-supported research to younger researchers and to respond to the needs of policy makers in the region. The ASRO IDRC Alumni partnership will provide assistance to these researchers to document successful examples of *Payment for Environmental Services* in Southeast Asia to help build the sustainable basis for environmental innovation and entrepreneurship among the poor in the region. Examples of *Payment for Environmental Services* include watershed protection fees for forest stewards, payment to community groups for coastal protection among many others. The Think Tank is based in Thailand but will be supported by EEPSEA alumni from the various countries in South East Asia.

The \$2,500 from the IDRC Alumni will be matched by \$10,000 from ASRO's RAF.

WARO (2011)

The Alumni Research Award supported younger researchers in the *Approche Ecosystème et santé humaine à travers le maraîchage à Cotonou*.

The market garden site has been worked for some 40 years. It is situated under the approach to the airport in the Centre of Cotonou where the land and the vegetables are polluted with exhaust from planes taking off and landing. The project will improve the health of the women and men of Cotonou connected with market gardening. Specifically the project will assess the degree of contamination of the soil, water and produce by pesticides and heavy metals, among other environmental pollutants.

The Alumni's gift of \$2,000 was matched with \$3,500 from WARO's RAF.

ROSSA (2012)

ROSSA made a grant for a small project on social learning. The project, *From Social Learning Group members to Change Facilitators in the face of multiple stressors: the development of a handbook for practitioners*, complements an on-going IDRC Ecohealth research project, *Vulnerability, Coping and Adaptation in the context of Climate Change and HIV/AIDS in South Africa*.

The project provides community members in South Africa's Eastern Province with the support, knowledge and skills they require to undertake problem solving that will continue long after the main research project is completed. A core group of individuals will be offered a problem-solving course for the multiple stressors they encounter such as

HIV/AIDS, climate change and food security, to enable them to take on the role of 'change agents and facilitators' for community adaptation into the future.

Dr. Georgina Cundill at Rhodes University, a young researcher just starting her research career is leading a team that includes MSc students in the 'social learning process' that is part of the ongoing Ecohealth project.

Alumni gift of \$3,000 was matched with \$19,900 from ROSSA's RAF.

ARO (2013)

The Alumni Research Award for 2013 is a partnership with ARO on the project *Prevention and Protection of children from Sexual Violence and Abuse*. The \$3,500 contributed by the Alumni to the budget of \$15,000 supports the participation of younger researchers.

Thanks to Dr Navsharan Sing and Dr Ambika Sharma for sharing highlights from the first report...



The project has assembled the team and sensitized all involved to the issue of sexual violence and familiarized them with new legislation. In the three target districts training with Police, the District Child Protection unit, the Social Defense Officer and activists working with children on education, protection, health and child labour has raised awareness of the sexual violence faced by children and the work required to prevent such incidents.

Significant progress has empowered local activists, armed with knowledge, tools and video resources, to initiate the prevention of sexual violence work within the communities, raising awareness around this important but difficult issue within communities and schools.

Work in the excluded spaces inhabited by marginalized sections of the communities and the engagement with schools has made a large number of children exposed to the issue of sexual abuse more likely to use this knowledge to prevent themselves and other children from becoming victims.

An important finding to date is the lack of awareness of new legislation and the need for sensitization on gendered inequalities and structures within Indian society. One experienced practitioner linked the increase in sexual violence against children to the skewed gender ratio leading to unmarried men taking out their sexual frustration on children and found that child rights activists are often unable to effectively intervene in incidents of sexual abuse because of the silence and stigmatization faced by survivors. In the case of rape of a three year old by her grandfather, the father of the child made it clear that he would rather kill the girl child than take any legal action against his father.

Another objective of the project is to raise awareness of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) and support survivors to overcome social and legal barriers to securing justice. Through contact with 59 survivors of sexual violence and their families, 17 have agreed to accept legal aid and advocates have filed notice of appointment in 9 court cases to date.

Research shows that many police officers have not received in depth training on the provisions of POCSO; some had never heard of the legislation. A leaflet on POCSO has been widely distributed to those working on sexual violence. Assistance has been given to survivors who are experiencing problems such as threats from the accused family or demands for travel money from the police. In all cases the survivors who were unaware of the status of their case are now fully informed and the advocates prepare for the court proceedings. Investigation has revealed that police expect the victims to arrange and pay for them to travel to other states / cities to arrest the accused. The activists continue to provide moral and emotional support to the survivors and accompany them when they attend a court.

The project will provide training to 100 activists in Anand, Sabarkantha and Ahmedabad in three sets of two-day training; by the end of December, 200 activists from more than 20 organisations will be trained.

Researchers have secured a letter from the ministry responsible for Women and Children, permitting the project to provide legal advice, assistance and representation to survivors of sexual violence. This has proven enormously useful in securing assistance from the Police: in some cases, referrals are now coming directly from the Police.

The lawyers within the team are doing this work *pro bono*, committed to doing this work as the team feels that they have the expertise required to ensure the best possible cases are brought before the court and that the survivors have an opportunity to feel comfortable enough to give their evidence.

MENA (2014)

Bruce Currie Alder, RD, MENA expresses sincere thanks for the Alumni for their continued engagement and generosity. The Alumni contribution proved decisive in catalyzing not just support for a single researcher, but a more substantial funding for the Arab Council for Social Science (ACSS). Specifically, the Alumni portion leveraged IDRC funding for post-doctoral fellowships within project 107980. The first round of fellowships were awarded to two individuals:



Jamil Mouawad, a recent PhD graduate from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) who has returned to Lebanon in order to publish his dissertation “The Negotiated State: State-Society Relations” and work at the Institut Francais du Proche Orient (IFPO) in Beirut studying “When Authoritarianism Fails in the Arab World”.

Al-Hadi Boushamma, an Algerian sociologist, spending nine months in Morocco at Mohamed University examining “The City in Tribal Societies: its Contribution to Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion”.

ACSS recently released the first of an annual ‘monitor’ report assessing the structure and function of social sciences across the region. The summary is available [here](#). Some key insights include:

- 70% of Arab universities were created after 1991
- the number of research centers (as stand-alone NGOs) increased by seven-fold over the past three decades
- 2/3 of scientific periodicals in Arab world are issued by such centers independent from universities
- 40% of researchers report benefiting to some extent from international funding

This first edition also identifies some key issues for further analysis, such as the divide between topics/issues considered appropriate for “science” and “public” spheres. Arguably there is a great need for critical inquiry to test assumptions and bust myths that underpin public discourse. Moving forward, ACSS promises to provide a much more nuanced understanding of the career paths and employment prospects for scientists.

LACRO (2015)

LACRO is supporting the field work of students completing a Masters Degree researching the financial education of rural women in Peru and options for their participation in business. The research is supervised by Carolina Trivelli at the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.

The focus of the research is the pros and cons of adopting informal trading versus a more formal cooperative model of women’s participation in business and efforts to ensure the sharing of the options with women.

The Budget for the Awards is \$12,000 with IDRC/LACRO contributing \$8,000 and the Alumni \$4,000. This is the first year that Alumni support comes from the fund established in remembrance of IDRC Alumna, Rachel DesRosier

ROSSA (2016)

The University of Rwanda has nominated the following graduate students for the Rachel DesRosiers Alumni Award:



Elias Nelly Bapfakurera is studying for an MSc in Agroforestry and Soil Management: *The role of indigenous Knowledge systems in adopting agroforestry and soil conservation for sustainable agriculture practices in Rwanda: Case of Musanze and Nyabihu Districts.*



Ildephonse Munyaneza is studying for an MSc in Economics in the School of Economics, College of Business and Economics: *Visual Modeling of the relationship between Financial Literacy and the Performance of Social Innovations in Rwanda.*

ARO (2017)

The award will support **The Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research** (formerly The Centre for Bhutan Studies) a research institute located in Thimphu, Bhutan, established in 1999 to promote research and scholarship on Bhutan. The Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH is the Secretariat of [International Society for Bhutan Studies \(ISBS\)](#).



ISBS will organize a launch conference in August 2018 at the Magdalen College (University of Oxford) to map current policy relevant areas requiring cutting-edge research in Bhutan. The grant will cover the mentoring and participation of four young Bhutanese scholars at the conference. As a first step ISBS is conducting a competitive process to select candidates.

The award this year will be \$15,000 of which the Alumni's contribution will be \$1,000 and the Rachel DesRosiers Fund will contribute \$5,000.

LACRO (2018)



This year the **Rachel DesRosiers Alumni Award** will be a partnership with LACRO who will cooperate with [Grupo Sofia](#), researchers in Peru working to draw attention to gender issues in the social

sciences to promote greater participation of women in knowledge production and dissemination, debate and policy making.



Grupo Sofia has selected Guadalupe Yapud from Ecuador as this year's DesRosiers young researcher. Guadeloupe is affiliated with the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO- ECUADOR). Her research is entitled "Gender, academia and social inequalities. Andean women facing multiple discrimination in the academic field". The combined grant from the IDRC Alumni partnership is \$15,000

MERO (2019)

Doaa Hammoudeh , a Palestinian, is a doctoral candidate in Social Policy at St Antony's College, Oxford University. Her research focuses on young Palestinians' experiences and practices of citizenship in a context of displacement, focusing specifically on Jerusalem areas physically dislocated by the Separation Wall. She is also affiliated with the Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University, in the occupied Palestinian territories, where she was previously a researcher prior to beginning her doctoral studies. Much of her research has explored the lives of vulnerable and marginalized subpopulations (with a specific focus on women), primarily through the utilization of qualitative methods to extrapolate contextually-relevant themes as they relate to health and social policy. The combined grant from the IDRC Alumni partnership is \$15,000.



Because of the COVID 19 Pandemic no Award was made in 2019

WARO 2021

Julie Crowley, Regional Director of IDRC Central and West Africa Regional Office has sent news that the Rachel DesRosiers Alumni Awards for 2021 have been awarded. Exceptionally, two grants were awarded this year for West and Central Africa, focusing on the impact of disinformation and misinformation on the use of scientific evidence, particularly in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.



"The 2020 Rachel DesRosiers Award provides a perfect opportunity for using innovation and best practice to develop sustainable solutions and strategies to mitigate the impact of dis/mis-information."

The first award is allocated to a research team from [eBASE Africa](#), an international charity based in Cameroon which aims to build capacities in the health sector with a focus on vulnerable populations and inclusive community development. The research led by Ms. Marthe Bogne Penka (left), will be looking into the impact of disinformation and misinformation on the use of research evidence in public policy decision-making in West and Central Africa. Ms. Bogne Penka's work seeks to communicate trustworthy information from research and meta-analysis recommendations to community members and policy makers. Other members of the team include PhD. Andrew Tangang (middle), a

public policy expert and Dr. Patrick Mbah Okwen (right), a medical doctor and health economist.



A second award is allocated to Mr. Asaah Ndah Asongwed, who will work on “the impact of COVID-a case study of Nigeria, Cameroon and Senegal”. Mr. Asongwed is undertaking a Ph.D. in Communication at Ghent University (Belgium) and currently works as a Conference Analyst with the Board Affairs Division of the African Development Bank (AfDB).

"I am honored to be a recipient of this prestigious Rachel Desrosiers Award. I hope that this study will contribute to enhancing our knowledge of the impact of disinformation and misinformation in the context of pandemics."

The combined grant from the IDRC Alumni partnership is \$30,000.

Thanks to Lancelot Sounelong Ehude, Regional Communications Advisor, WARO

Webinar

As advertised in the November 30, 2021 issue of the Bulletin, IDRC WARO mounted a very successful webinar on the theme "Africa and COVID-19: Disinfodemic."

The webinar featured research by Ms. Penka Bogne, from eBase Africa, and Mr. Asaah Ndah Asongwed, two of the Rachel DesRosiers Alumni Award holders for 2020-2021.

The research is learning how, in the context of the COVID19 pandemic, the “disinfodemic” affects the use of research results in decision-making and creates challenges in the implementation of public policies.

Concepts and definitions

- Misinformation:** False information spread regardless of intention to mislead
- Disinformation:** Deliberately misleading or spreading wrong information
- Fake news:** Purposely fabricated information that mimics the form of mainstream news
- Disinfodemic:** Falsehoods fueling the pandemic and its impacts

Mitigation strategies

- Evidence use (Policymakers)**
 - Constructive use of social media
 - Policymakers – Research partnerships
 - Evidence barometer
 - Storytelling
- Policy implementation (Citizens)**
 - Storytelling
 - Factchecking platforms
 - Media/digital literacy
 - Train journalists and opinion leaders
 - Use of local languages to communicate
 - Engaging with community leaders
 - Include critical thinking in school curriculum

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Mr. Asaah Ndah Asongwed

Ms. Bogne Penka

IDRC President Jean Lebel and WARO RD Julie Crowley, in their introduction thanked the Alumni for its support through the DesRosiers Award.

Your editor attended and was impressed by the content and presentation of the young researchers and by the impressive expertise sharing their evaluation of the challenge Disinformation about COVID has for Africa balanced by a realistic assessment of where the opportunities to make a difference are to be found.

[Click](#) for a video recording of the Webinar.

CHANGES 2022

As previously reported the Alumni now contributes to awards supporting cohort of young researchers. The table summarizes each awardee's topics of research and link with Centre Programming.

NAME	DIVISION*	TITLE OF AWARD
Maude Jodoin-Léveillé	CRFS	Limiting the agricultural "exodus" and strengthening women's participation in urban agriculture: the case of urban women in Lomé and Ouagadougou
Sandra Sagbohan	SIE	The Impact of Mobile Money on the Women Economic Empowerment in Togo.
Zahia Antoun	ES	Examining the educational experiences of Syrian refugee students in high school in Lebanon.
Aisha Barkhad	GH	An eco-bio-social conceptual framework for dengue virus epidemiology in Latin America: a systematic review and Delphi study
Cheick Oumar Tiendrebéogo	GH and ACRE	Intersectional analysis of family planning unmet needs: what place for research ethics in context of security crises in Burkina Faso?
Tanya Irwin	DIG	The Impact of Armed Group Taxation on Wartime Political Order and Governance with Evidence from the Philippines

Thanks to Jacinthe Marcil
Senior Programs Advisor
Office of the Vice President Programs and Partnerships
IDRC

*CRFS: Climate-Resilient Food Systems/ES: Education and Science /GH: Global Health/SIE: Sustainable Inclusive Economies/DIG: Democratic and Inclusive Governance/ACRE Advisory Committee on Research Ethics.