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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. 44  
September 2015

**Save this date**  
**Annual General Meeting & Luncheon: Tuesday November 3, 2015**  
**Honouring LACRO**

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IDRC - Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC) 2015

Thanks to Michèle Wilson for Translation

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Wish to support the IDRC Alumni Association? Contributions can be made annually or over a three-year period:

1 year	\$20
2 years	\$35
3 years	\$50

Cheques payable to the **IDRC Alumni Association**.

**Return to:** Donna Bickford, 1195 Priory Lane, Ottawa, ON, Canada. K1C 1Z8

**Electronic transfer** is also possible for Alumni across Canada and in other parts of the world who have Canadian accounts. For details contact Gerald Bourrier <[bici@sympatico.ca](mailto:bici@sympatico.ca)>

**Annual General Meeting & Luncheon: Tuesday November 3, 2015  
Honouring LACRO**

Renew acquaintances with former colleagues, enjoy a beverage and a Latin American lunch, learn about the Centre's work in the region, win a prize, and support your Association.

**Time/Date:** 11:45 am on **Tuesday, November 3, 2015**

**Place:** Hopper Room, IDRC, 150 Kent Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Ottawa.

**Family members welcome.**

**Cost:** \$20 per person. Please pay at the door.

**RSVP before Monday, October 19.**



The door prizes woven by a new association of women located near Cusco, Peru, one of the groups studied by the young researchers supported by this year's Alumni Research Award in partnership with LACRO.

## **From the Chair**

Rob Robertson

### **Give Us the Tools**

In 1941, with Britain and its empire alone, Churchill implored President Roosevelt to “give us the tools, and we’ll finish the job.” Echoing these inspiring words, in 1979 the Centre published a volume called “Give Us the Tools” to document the fight of developing countries for scientific and technical progress. The book quotes President David Hopper as saying, “To suggest that modern technology ... should be shunned because it appears to carry with its adoption uncertain and unwanted side effects begs the crucial issues of our times. The alternative to scientifically derived technology is not a society free of the effects of technology, it is a stagnant society. . . All human culture rests on some form of technology... The Centre's program should seek to find ways to bring help to those who are least able to benefit immediately from presently available technologies.”

If Dr. Hopper were alive today, he might think it unnecessary to advocate technological progress. We are awash in info-tech, bio-tech, and every other kind of tech, and few would consider “shunning” it. IDRC now has a policy orientation in its work, and has moved away from supporting the development of “tools” in the literal sense. But its first few decades included supporting research on a fascinating variety of real live technologies designed to close the technological gap that preoccupied Dr. Hopper. But what has happened to all of them? In some cases I know their fate, but in others the end of the story is unknown.



*Eager Baboons?*

My first trip for the Centre in 1977 included patent-related work on two major efforts. In Singapore, the Centre supported a project on developing a rather fragrant pond system to purify piggery waste, and equipment that would promote the growth of micro-algae in them for animal feed. In New Delhi, I visited the premises of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences where they were working on the development of a contraceptive vaccine. I remember vividly the cages full of excited baboons, eager to play their role in the research. Eventually the vaccine patents were abandoned. There were just too many social questions and too much legal liability to interest the commercial sector.

Other projects I remember included work on PVC plastic water pumps for rural villages in Southeast Asia (you can now watch You Tube videos on how to make your own\*), fish deboners (rotating cylinders that extruded the meat through little holes), and a variety of Earth and Engineering Sciences projects supporting local industries aimed at producing everything from weaving machines that “introduced patterns into the weave” to dyes taken from local plants for use in cosmetics.

Alumni, some of you were involved in projects aimed at giving developing countries hard technologies for health and social and economic progress. In a world where Gates and other foundations pursue high tech innovation as a priority for developing countries and take their share of criticism for it, why not share with us your own memories about the Centre’s efforts to give them the tools!

\* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdVw5R4JBfc>

Ed: The pump Rob refers to was one seen in Malaysia. For Historica Canada video on IDRC’s water pump visit: <https://www.historicacanada.ca/content/heritage-minutes/water-pump>

## Alumni News

### David and Merlie Glover...Dancing to the Music of Time



David and Merlie worked at IDRC in Ottawa in the 1980s before spending fifteen years in Singapore, where David managed environmental economics networks from ASRO. They returned to Ottawa in 2008 but still spend their winters in Singapore. Since retiring, Merlie (née Macabulos) has been an avid tennis player. David plays saxophone in the Ottawa jazz clubs. You can usually catch him the fourth Saturday of each month at Festival Japan restaurant (right across the street from IDRC on Kent Street!)

To listen to David visit: [www.reverbnation.com/davidglover88](http://www.reverbnation.com/davidglover88)



## Pierre Sané

Pierre writes from Dakar:

As a controller in the late 70s I was called upon to visit and work with institutions in all fields of S&T research: public health, agriculture, social sciences, macro-economics etc., allowing me, through the lens of financial and organizational management, to encounter and cherish an African community of scientists committed to the transformation of their continent.

This experience combined with intellectual curiosity and enriched by a return to school helped me to shape strategies of support to research in West Africa as a Regional Director. All thanks to IDRC.

Later, Amnesty International estimated in 1992 that this professional background grounded on the values and organizational principles of an organization devoted to universalism like IDRC qualified me to lead Amnesty as its Secretary General for 10 years, followed by UNESCO after another return to school. IDRC fashioned me into being a "learning person" (Didn't we have something like this--a learning organization under my mentors Ivan Head and Ray Audet?)

After I left UNESCO in 2010 I went to Japan to teach political sciences at Doshisha University in Kyoto. I am now back in Senegal and have founded with Boutros Ghali (former Secretary General of the UN) a "tiny" Think Tank\* funded with our pensions for now with the ambitious goal to decolonize the African future! I invite all retired IDRC staff to join us.

You can see that even though I left IDRC 23 years ago, IDRC never left me.

\*Visit the Imagine Africa Institute at: <http://www.imagineafricainstitute.com/index.php>

### “IMAGINE AFRICA

It is a matter of picturing Africa to oneself. Not simply of restoring it through history, the sciences, culture or projecting into the future, but of creating it, of deciding what Africa is and will be, or at least what is possible, and of validating this image through dialogue and informed debate.”

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## News from Elsewhere

### David Brooks...How not to give a lecture: OR, So many routes to Celebrity...



On a recent visit to Israel and Palestine David Brooks was scheduled to give a lecture on a potential Israeli-Palestinian agreement on water at An-Najah University. An-Najah, located in Nablus, deep in the West Bank has a history of being the source of many militants.

David's *trip report*... The original invitation came from the Prof. who teaches environmental law at An-Najah and, a day before the lecture, he phoned to ask if he could invite others to attend. I saw no reason to say "no." Even so, I was surprised and a bit nervous the next day to see the

lecture hall filled to the rafters. Of course, there was nothing to do but get started after a fulsome introduction from another prof whose work IDRC had supported. I noted some reaction from the students at that point, and, as I got going perhaps a third of the audience dribbled out -- not as in a protest, but by ones or small groups.

It was disconcerting to say the least. However, the rest of my lecture went well, and at the end there were good questions from the remaining audience. And there was also a tearful apology from a young woman who both serves as secretary to the Prof who invited me and as a student in environmental law. She was asked to put posters up around the university with the subject of the talk, and my bio. She knew the subject of the talk, but had no idea of my bio. So she looked me up on Google and found a great deal on David Brooks -- but of course it was the *New York Times* columnist, not I. No wonder a lot of students were disappointed.

### Neill McKee...Middle Earth re-re-discovered

Many a day at IDRC evoked images of Bilbo and Frodo Baggins and their Hobbit kin of the famed Lord of the Rings. I am reminded of this with a recent communication from Neill McKee, IDRC's one-time filmmaker in residence. Neill's start in international development in 1968 was as a CUSO volunteer in Sabah the former British North Borneo, East Malaysia. As a geography teacher Neill knew his students would expect him to learn all he could about his new home. In time, with careful mapping, he discovered that Mount Kinabalu, surrounded by the hidden valleys, rivers and challenging forest was none other than the Lonely Mountain in Middle Earth and that he had been posted in Rivendale (Kota Belud or "Hill Fort") in The Shire. Neill and a Peace Corps colleague held many important meetings of their newly-formed North Borneo Frodo Society (NBFS) and sent out minutes far and wide, attracting a great deal of attention, so much so that an urban myth grew that JRR Tolkien had lived in North Borneo at one time. That was clearly an Orchish falsehood but JRR did join the NBFS in 1971 and it tickled him so much that it is mentioned in his most noted biography.



Fast forward now to Neill and Beth's recent move from Maryland to Albuquerque, New Mexico and Neill's delight in discovering that on August 1<sup>st</sup> in the hilly town of Madrid, 45 minutes from his new home on the other side of the Sandia Mountains there would be a "freak flag parade and world's smallest pub crawl" including in a mine tavern with deep tunnels. How could Neill resist the chance to unfurl his newly-made NBFS banner and, enchant a new band of would-be American Hobbit members?

Disclaimer: Neill confirms that there is absolutely no truth in that long-circulating rumour that his discovery of Middle Earth in South East Asia was a side effect of a vegetable enjoyed by the native descendants of Hobbits living on Borneo's hillsides for its medical benefits. (Google "hobbit-like humans found in South East Asia": [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homo\\_floresiensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homo_floresiensis).) To join the NBFS and feel its real benefits contact Neill at nmckee20@gmail.com.

## Réal Lavergne...election selection



Real as Vice-President of Fair Vote Canada's National Capital Region:  
<http://www.fairvotecanadancr.ca/?q=node/18> site.

Spotted buy Amitav Rath doing his pre-election due diligence.

## Gallery



Louise Behan writes:

We had a mini-reunion at Bev Chataway and husband Rick's summer place in Cherry Hill, Nova Scotia. Nancy and Steve Hutchinson, Shaun Bona and I had lunch there on August 18. Bev is hoping to expand the group next year so anyone coming to the Lunenburg/Bridgewater area should let us know.

## Where Are They Now?

### Eileen's Progress

Eileen Alma occupied many positions during her twenty years at IDRC, and each of them was a stepping stone to her current senior position helping to build the capacity of women to undertake leadership in their organizations and communities.



Eileen joined the Centre as an assistant program co-ordinator in 1993, working on the Middle East Peace Process in the Special Initiatives division, then moved on to work in the Peace, Conflict and Development program and Women's Rights and Citizenship program. Her final position at IDRC was as program officer with the Governance, Security and Justice team.

She says, "Naturally, with that span of time, I have a range of memories of both real successes as well as harder times we faced as colleagues and friends such as cuts, program changes, and the untimely loss of some colleagues over the years. I really enjoyed the important but modest and humbling work we were doing in support of research regarding Palestinian refugees for many years and the connection we had to leaders in those relevant fields. What I regret is that the Middle East and North Africa is still facing these intractable issues, and in some cases it's much worse than before for refugees – Palestinian and other - across the region. But I think it was the work I did with the Women's Rights and Citizenship program that was really most rewarding personally. Some of my colleagues were incredible mentors and supporters, and I grew a great deal just from knowing them and observing their work and practice. I am especially proud of the role I played with others in helping bring together our work on decentralization and women's rights that culminated in an (exhausting) global conference in

Mexico City with 550 people in 2008. That was truly a team effort. I also am proud of the efforts at synthesizing our work on women's rights and access to land in Africa – which had been initiated by many others before me who are also IDRC alumni.”

Reflecting on her personal life when working at the Centre Eileen says, “My family life has been closely tied to my time at IDRC as I know it has for others. I married and had two children while working there, and because of it my kids were fortunate to be exposed to a much broader perspective of the world than I ever was growing up.”



**Eileen Alma**  
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In 2013 Eileen was able to translate all of her hard work and experience into gaining the position of Director of the International Centre for Women's Leadership at the Coady Institute at St. Francis Xavier University. It was created in 2010 and operates with a diverse set of funders and partners. It has five different programs all pertaining to women's leadership and community-driven

development and has several others in initial stages based on identified areas of priority. Currently they work with more than 100 women per year who come from Aboriginal communities, or the Canadian non-profit sector, or from developing countries, helping them to develop their professional capacity as well as the capacity of their organizations, sectors and communities. The programs also include one-on-one mentorship, research and community-based project work. Eileen says, “It's exciting and is really about women empowered to build collective leadership from the ground up. We're expanding and I'm happy to be involving former colleagues in some cases. The programs are getting a lot of attention – we had 7000 applications for 20 spaces in one of our programs this year, so I am constantly looking at opportunities to build and meet demand. I've also got a number of other diverse projects going on, such as providing advisory support for a nascent Centre in Leadership excellence in Haiti, and am co-investigator of a SSHRC-funded project on women's livelihoods in the artisanal mining sector in partnership with Carleton University.”

Living in the small town of Antigonish is a real change from Ottawa. Eileen says, “It's been an adjustment (and a hard winter), but we're really getting a deeper picture of Canada, historically, geographically... of what this country is all about. It's quite beautiful to be along the ocean.” Although she is gone from the Centre, Eileen says she is, “very happy to be connected to so many alumni and I hope we can continue to build on the areas of work that we believe in – areas where we can see positive transformations. Let me know if you're ever heading our way – we'd love to see you.”

<http://www.coady.stfx.ca/coady/staff/eileen/>

It's in the cards....  
Jean-Marc Fleury



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CANADA

## Letters to the Editor

“Greetings from Bogota where I am teaching a summer course on Peacebuilding at the Universidad de los Andes. It was a treat to receive the newsletter here in Colombia where the peace process is a critical issue. It never ceases to amaze me how we managed to get peacebuilding on the IDRC agenda in the mid 1990s when the field was so new. I always give credit to IDRC for enabling me and other colleagues to contribute to the development of the field.

By the way, I think I also mentioned to you that after supporting the War-torn Societies Project at UNRISD in the mid 1990s, I am now on the Governing Council of WSP's successor institution--Interpeace. Sometimes it takes a few decades for IDRC investments to yield their fruit!”

Necla Tshergi

## IN MEMORIAM



1926-2015

IDRC's tribute to Flora MacDonald

### **Remembering Flora MacDonald, former Chairperson of IDRC's Board of Governors**

*27/07/2015*

IDRC was saddened to learn of the passing on July 26 of politician and humanitarian, the Honourable Flora MacDonald. Ms. MacDonald served as Chairperson of IDRC's Board of Governors from 1992 to 1997.

“Flora MacDonald set a shining example as a Canadian with her commitment to Canada playing a leading, positive role in the world. This includes the immense contributions made during her leadership of IDRC,” said Jean Lebel, President of IDRC.

The Honourable Monte Solberg, IDRC's current Chairperson echoed Mr. Lebel's words. “I am proud to carry on Flora MacDonald's legacy of leadership at IDRC.”

Ms. MacDonald held three cabinet posts during her 16 years as a member of Canada's Parliament, serving as Canada's first female foreign minister, and as Minister of Employment and Immigration, and Minister of Communications.

After retiring from politics, Ms. MacDonald concentrated on international development and humanitarian work, working with IDRC and later on behalf of such groups as CARE, Oxfam, and Doctors Without Borders. She went on to found the non-governmental organization Future



Generations Canada. Ms. MacDonald visited Afghanistan frequently during her years with the NGO, with the goal to educate women and to introduce participatory systems to Afghan society.

Among her many awards, she received the Government of India's Padma Shri award in 2004, one of India's highest civilian awards, for distinguished service and excellence. Flora MacDonald was also a Companion of the Order of Canada.

<http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Misc/Pages/NewsDetails.aspx?NewsID=739>

See also John E. Trent tribute in Embassy <http://www.embassynews.ca/opinion/2015/07/29/flora-macdonald-a-grand-life-and-a-great-human/47432>



Marjorie Nkomo, wife of the then-South African high commissioner; Flora MacDonald; and Nowetu Luti, then a counsellor at the high commission, at a Women's Day dinner on July 8, 2007.

### **IDRC United Way Campaign**

Donate to the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC)

IDRC Alumni members are invited again this year to contribute to the GCWCC through IDRC employees' campaign.

You probably remember IDRC's strong participation in the annual fundraising drive for charitable organizations. Your gift can be directed to support United Way/Centraide and Healthpartners, or any other registered Canadian charity of your choice. Every gift makes a difference in our community.

The 2015 campaign - *Together we Shine!* - was launched on September 14<sup>th</sup> and will run until October 24<sup>th</sup>.

Alumni contributions are always highly appreciated. This year, if you are planning to contribute to the GCWCC, you can make your gift in such a way that it can be included as part of the IDRC campaign.

If you are receiving your pension you should by now have received an invitation to give to the campaign. Instead of returning it directly to the United Way office, you can send it to: Alejandra Vargas-Garcia, IDRC, PO Box 8500, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3H9.

If you are not yet receiving your pension, and want to make a donation, you can contact Alejandra Vargas-Garcia (613-696-2042), or email [a.vargas-garcia@idrc.ca](mailto:a.vargas-garcia@idrc.ca) who will send you a Gift Form, which you can return with your donation. IDRC will forward all donations and forms to GCWCC and will add your donation to the total raised from current IDRC employees to help us achieve our campaign goal.

Thank you very much for your support.

Claire Thompson, Curtis Small, Zoe Boutilier,  
2015 IDRC-GCWCC Organizing Committee

*Please note that pledges are not automatically renewed – if you would like to donate this year, you must renew your pledge.*



*Don't be shy? Join IDRC Alumni on Facebook:  
at "IDRC Alumni" group and / or "IDRC" page.*



<https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/556623107712593/>

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