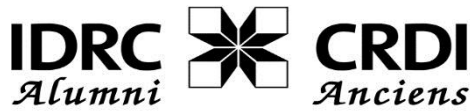




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*The IDRC Alumni provides opportunities for former IDRC employees to maintain personal and professional links, and supports continuing dialogue on development issues.*

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## Annual General Meeting & Luncheon: Tuesday, November 1, 2016

# Bulletin

No. 47  
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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)>

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## Annual General Meeting & Luncheon: Tuesday, November 1, 2016

### This year we honour ROSSA

#### From the Chair

Rob Robertson

#### Travelling on Your Stomach

A friend who was a foreign service officer recently told me how the guest of honour at some Saudi banquets is honoured...he is served a goat's eye. Happily for me, I was never so honoured. In fact I'm quite bereft of stomach-turning tales like that, one escape being at the snake restaurant in Hanoi where you pay extra if the delicacy's heart is still beating. And it was with trepidation that I went to a restaurant in Colonia Uruguay with the Burone family where they served only blood pudding, but even the dessert was good!



Geoff Oldham  
*chows down*

But some IDRC alumni had closer encounters with exotic food. Rich Fuchs writes that while travelling in central Benin his party arrived at a dimly lit eating house. After helping the women pound manioc into dough, he learned it went with that night's special meal, sheep's brain in spicy sauce. Rich describes it as "akin to beef brisket, except shorter, whiter and chewier." He says it was best taken with significant amounts of the local beer.

Michael Graham says the only Asian delicacy he ever turned down was balut, which is a developing bird embryo that is boiled and eaten from the shell. His Filipino host was most disappointed, having invested much time in finding it at a hawker stall. Michael also recalls durian, sometimes praised as "heavenly and divine" and sometimes said to "taste and smell like a sewer", a very polarizing fruit. Michael has many fond memories of great dishes like pork-rib soup for breakfast with Jingjai, and all the great food at Chinese banquets, Malaysian banana-leaf restaurants, the curries of South Asia, wild-game bar-b-ques in Africa, and picnics in the Andes.

Pauline Robert-Bradley recalls a memorable trip to a restaurant in China that specialized in local meats. She says, "Oil was simmering in a vat, ready for us to do some cooking. Then the huge trays of food were brought in with much pomp and circumstance. They were laden with offal, sheep's throat and pig's tongue. When the cooking was done, my interpreter proudly removed a long piece of black slithery meat from the pot and carefully placed it on my plate. I stared at it and using my chopsticks to turn it this way and that I tried to think how I could get out of eating it." Looking up she caught sight of Geoff Oldham's twinkling eyes as he whispered "It is not going to go away." Pauline also recalls eating duck web in Chiang Mai. Little orange feet arrived, standing in a brown sauce. She spit out the tiny bones that she hoped were not toe nails.

Shaun Bona is another meat-eater. He recalls trips to Carnivore restaurants in Nairobi and Johannesburg where the fare was "quasi-endangered species." He says, "They usually offer about fifteen meats, including camel, crocodile, dik dik, gazelle, giraffe, impala, kudu, ostrich, springbok, warthog and zebra, served anything from kicking to medium. (author's note: we have chosen not to look up 'dik dik'.) Worth the extra arterial coating, one can nosh-up on Boerewors, a fatty but lip-

smacking sausage that are essentially intestines stuffed with meat and off-cuts, mulled with herbs and grilled on a braai. With it you can drink a Springbok cocktail of mint liqueur and a velvety layer of amarula, a milky drink fermented from the marula fruit. And you must drink it by placing your hands behind your back, galumphing your feet, snorting through your nostrils, squealing, picking up the glass by your teeth, and sculling the drink without spilling a drop.”



Well all of this is fine, but Kaye Meikle appeals more to the Ontario palate with her memory of group meals at IDRC headquarters featuring Susan Warren’s orzo pasta salad and Karl Smith’s spicy Jamaican fried chicken. Put that with some of Mom’s lemon meringue pie and you’ve got a meal.

## Alumni News

### Venkatesh Mannar

In June the U of T awarded the degree of Doctor of Science, *Honoris Causa*



From the [citation](#)..

“Venkatesh Mannar is not a household name. But it should be....

...this chemical engineer and food technologist has spent close to four decades working in developing countries around the world to help put an end to malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency.

Humble table salt, as it turns out, is a cheap and effective delivery method to get minute quantities of much-needed micronutrients like iodine into the diets of men, women and children....

Since the 1970s, Mannar has been the principal architect of the global salt iodization program now reaching nearly five billion people through his work with UNICEF, the World Health Organization, World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency. This program has led to a dramatic reduction in iodine deficiency disorders across the world.

But why stop there? Mannar is working with a team at the University of Toronto to infuse salt with other nutrients such as vitamin B12, folic acid, iron and zinc. He also sees fortified tea as another way to thwart nutrition. Anemia in Africa and Southeast Asia — he’s coming for you, too!”

For more on Vankatesh’s current work visit the University of Toronto’s [Centre for Global Engineering](#).

Thanks to Lilah Moore

## Yue-Man Yeung



In recognition as a prolific scholar in urban, global and China studies, Yue-Man was awarded a Doctor of Laws, honoris causa (LL.D.) by Western University at its Hong Kong Convocation on May 29.

For more on Yue-Man's association with his alma mater and his current work visit [Alumni Western University](#).

## The Rachel DesRosier Award 2016-17

The Rachel Des Rosier award for 1916-1917 will support an Alumni partnership with IDRC's Regional Office for Sub-Saharan Africa (ROSSA) to support young researchers at the University of Rwanda in connection with a recently approved project that aims to support women's participation in economic activities in poor rural communities to increase productivity and decent employment for women. The Alumni will contribute \$5,000 to be matched by ROSSA.



## Gallery

Sheldon Shaeffer was in Ottawa in May and shared 'snaps' from his time in the Social Sciences Division ca. late 1980s...



Constance, Lise, Chantall, Louise Raymond,  
Hélène Mongeon SSD 1980s



Daniel, Susanne, Sheldon RAGG  
Conference Jamaica 1980s



Annual Staff Meeting SSD ca. 1988



Chris, Terry, John

How hard can it be to take a selfie?

## Where Are They Now?

### Firoze Manji

#### The IDRC years



I have great memories of my time at IDRC (1989-1992). I joined just after completing my PhD (supported by IDRC) done in Kenya while I was head of the Oral Health Research Unit of the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI). I took over from Stephen Moses as Regional Representative for Health Sciences in Eastern and Southern Africa. My immediate 'boss' was Richard Wilson (and later Karl Smith), head of the Health Sciences Division, who was some 9,000 miles away, which meant that delegation of responsibility and authority was essential.

There were so many interesting initiatives during my time with IDRC.

These come readily to mind....

A bearded American walked into my office and described what sounded like a really crazy idea involving launching a low-flying satellite that was once used as a spy satellite, with a radio transmitter on board that would enable people in the health sector in Africa to connect with each other as well as with libraries internationally via email using a computer attached to a ham-radio. Over lunch he told me about his being an air force pilot in the Vietnam war and how he was shocked by the killings. He spoke at anti-war protests in the US during his leave, with the consequence that he was judged to be mentally ill by the military, imprisoned and dishonorably discharged. It was then I realized this was none other than the famous Charlie Clements, whose subsequent decision to train as a physician and become the El Salvador guerillas' only doctor, all the while refusing to carry arms, was told in [\*Witness to War: An American Doctor in El Salvador\*](#) (that was subsequently made into a [film](#)). The long and short of this was that the 'crazy' idea, HealthNet, was supported by IDRC. I worked with Charlie to set up ground stations and user groups in five countries in Africa. The following year Charlie and I attended the conference of the [International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War](#) (winner of 1985 Nobel Peace Prize) and arranged for the Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda to send his opening address to the conference by email via the low-flying satellite. Remember, at that time few people knew what email was about, so this created a great sensation.

IDRC supported the first longitudinal study of the impact of structural adjustment programs on the lives of working women in Zimbabwe. The project demonstrated not only the growing impoverishment of communities, but also the breakdown of social cohesion as women sought to survive by taking on multiple jobs, preventing them from participating in social organizations in which they were formally active.

When the IDRC Board decided that IDRC should support the growing mass movements in South Africa. Marc van Ameringen and I were assigned the task of meeting with the leadership of the liberation movements with the aim of supporting initiatives that would assist the development of appropriate policies for post-apartheid South Africa. This was an extraordinarily inspiring period with profound hope and incredible creativity of ideas in the health sector, women's movement, universities, and social movements. One of the first initiatives brought together people working in the health sector across all parts of South Africa, many of whom had never met or knew about each other's work because of apartheid policies. Unable to get permission to hold the meeting in South Africa, we met in Maputo, Mozambique, with hundreds of participants attending. It was the first time I had attended a health conference where presentations were interspersed with liberation songs, beautiful renderings of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika, and toi-toing around the conference hall.

IDRC supported an HIV-AIDS prevention project in the ANC camps in the Front Line States. The project-leader was Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who subsequently became Minister of Health, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, then Minister of Home Affairs, and more recently (2009-2012) Chairperson of the African Union Commission. Each time I have met her since, I like to ask her when she plans to submit her final report on the IDRC project ...

### **Life after IDRC**

In 1992, Pierre Sané took over as regional director in Nairobi, but hardly had he started than he announced that he was moving to join Amnesty International as Secretary-General. Redundancies were in the air, and when the opportunity came, I too left to join the Aga Khan Foundation in the UK as

CEO, based in London, though living in Oxford. It was with much regret that I left IDRC, a place with so many remarkable people.

Much of my work at AKF involved negotiation with the EU for rural development projects in India, Pakistan and Tajikistan, which I visited frequently. I saw my time in the UK as only temporary, but our children, Kainde and Sembene, were insistent that we did not move again until they finished their education, as they found the move from Nairobi to Oxford traumatic.

Three years later, a call from Pierre Sané enticed me to apply for the position of Africa Program Director at Amnesty International in London. At the final interview, one of the board members asked: “Why would a dentist want to work for Amnesty?” I couldn’t resist responding: “I guess I know all there is to know about torture!”

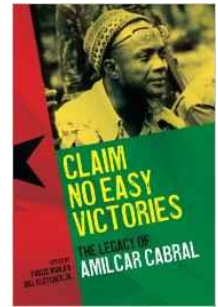
In the elections of May 1997, the Labour Party in the UK was swept into power in Parliament and gained many seats at local government level. My then wife, Shereen Karmali, was elected as County Councillor for Oxfordshire South, the ward in which we lived – she was to become County Chairperson four years later. It became apparent that with her having to attend regular evening meetings and my having to commute each day to London, our children were in danger of being neglected.

So, I stepped down from Amnesty in 1997, and to work from home. After a few months of consultancies (I founded the non-profit organization, [Fahamu – Networks for Social Justice](#)). I succeeded in negotiating grants from the EU, DfID and IDRC for distance learning courses for human rights and social justice organizations in Southern and Eastern Africa. The newly established IDRC office in Johannesburg provided the initial funding that helped leverage resources from others. Over the next few years we developed thirteen distance learning courses for hundreds of human rights activists across Africa, many in collaboration with the University of Oxford (where I still am, Visiting Fellow); the UN Commission for Human Rights; the UN System Staff College; and the Association for the Prevention of Torture.

In the course of developing this work, I founded and became the editor-in-chief of an e-magazine on social justice in Africa, [Pambazuka News](#). Started in December 2000, the readership expanded rapidly: when I left in 2012, we estimated that our annual readership was around one million. Coming out every week without fail, initially in English, but subsequently also in French and Portuguese, the e-magazine established itself as an authoritative and radical pan-African voice on the struggle for freedom and emancipation, winning many international prizes. In 2010 we launched a book-publishing venture, [Pambazuka Press / Fahamu Books](#) publishing some 50 books from leading thinkers and social movements across the African continent and beyond.

In September 2012, I stepped down from Fahamu and Pambazuka and set up a book publishing enterprise, [Daraja Press](#) which I continue to run, while taking on other assignments. It was also when Shereen and I separated and eventually divorced.

From April 2013, I spent a year as the head of the Communications, Documentation and Information Centre (CODICE) of CODESRIA (an IDRC grantee for many years) in Senegal, which gave me an opportunity not only to get to know this prestigious institution from the inside, but also to get to know the incredibly interesting, vibrant and welcoming city of Dakar. At CODESRIA, I co-edited a book with Bill Fletcher Jr, an anthology of essays entitled *Claim No Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amilcar Cabral*, with contributions from some 40 writers, including Samir Amin and Angela Davis. I also oversaw the production of *Silence Would Be Treason: The Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa*. Both books were jointly published by CODESRIA and Daraja Press.



From 2014-2106, I worked with ThoughtWorks, a software consultancy company which describes itself as “strong believers in the power of software and technology as tools for social change.” I was the director of their pan-African institute based initially in Ghana and then in Kenya, but traveling extensively (and exhaustingly!). We organized a series of online courses on Pan-Africanism and Pan-African intellectuals, as well as a course run in Johannesburg on Pan-African women intellectuals.

At the end of April this year, I moved to Montréal. My partner over several years, Molly Kane, and I married in May a few days after I my 66<sup>th</sup> birthday. Both our families are spread far and wide, from Seattle in the west to Nairobi in the east, Scotland in the north and Mexico in the south, so it wasn't feasible to bring everyone together for a ‘wedding’. Instead we will travel around and enjoy multiple celebrations!

For now, I am based in Montréal continuing to publish radical books from Africa and the third world and refining my rusty French.

## Letters to the Editor

Colleagues Remember Maria Jose Gamma

Maria was a friendly and unselfish colleague. She was always ready to help. She certainly helped me when my husband was posted to Lisbon and I had to learn Portuguese through a two-hour course every day before going to work, for a month, before our departure. She was always there to answer my questions and practice with me. I feel I owe her in a large part my being able to settle rapidly in Portugal and, later, in Brazil. Thanks to her, I studied and learnt to love the Lusitanian language, culture, literature and music.

Jaqueline Bustos



## IN MEMORIAM



Ron Archer  
1946-2016

Ron died suddenly at his home in Scotland in May. The story of Ron's career with and after his years with IDRC was featured in a *Where are they Now?* in the *IDRC Alumni Bulletin* for [January 2016](#).

From the Obituary in Scotland:

Ronald died unexpectedly at his home of 14 years, in [Forgandenny](#), Scotland on Friday, May 13, 2016, aged 69 ... Ronald's international development work for the Canadian government and the International Federation of the Red Cross will be remembered by friends and colleagues around the world.



Ronald and Bridget

Friends and colleagues remember.

I worked with Ronald at IDRC in the Information Sciences field over a period of about 20 years, off and on, concluding with our involvement in a research program investigating the impact of information on development. Ronald was the project manager of this large, complex, international network. Its success owed much to his experience, good nature, and organizational skills – attributes that he brought to all his projects with IDRC. Ronald was always a steady, capable sort of guy, but I suspect not particularly fulfilled until his assignment at ICOD in Halifax, where he fell in love, inherited a family, and began a new life. Bravo!

Paul McConnell

Ron Archer was a real gentleman and a gentle soul – you could only like him. I was Ron's partner Program Officer in Information Sciences for about four years, working under Martha Stone – yes, guys, I was a Program Officer at one point..... until they found out I could 'officer' pretty good but could not 'program' so well. Ron was exceptional at both, and then some. Another dedicated IDRCer who contributed a great deal has left us for that development organization in the sky.

Claude Paul Boivin

Ron joined IDRC a few weeks after I did in 1971. I watched him create the IDRC library at the PEB building, literally in front of my office on the 3rd floor. He was a gentle man, a friend and colleague.

Gerry Bourrier

A friend and colleague from Ron's time with ICOD recommended that raising a glass of a good single malt whiskey would be an appropriate salute.

Chris Smart

## Bulletin Archive on Line



Past issues of the IDRC Alumni Bulletin, from the first edition in January 2003, are now available in the [ARCHIVE folder](#). The ARCHIVE folder has subfolders for each year, starting in 2003, and each year folder has a subfolder for English and another for Français. Bilingual bulletins are copied under each of the language folders.

Bulletins for 1 to 26 are either English or French. From 27-39 they are bilingual and from 40 on either English or French.

Chris Smart



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