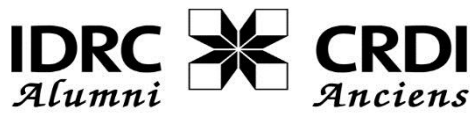




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page.




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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. 49  
January 2017

### **In This Issue**

**From the Chair**  
Rob Robertson

#### **The Life of an NGO**

**Alumni News**  
Louise Behan / Kathryn Touré / Réal Lavergne

**Where are The Now?**  
Erin O' Manique

**Rachel DesRosiers Award**  
Rethinking Financial Inclusion as a strategy to enhance Empowerment in Poor Rural Women

**The Luncheon and the Learning:**  
Martha Melesse: **Working for African Youth**

**Alumni in Print**  
Annick Hardie

**Gallery**  
Photos from the 2016 AGM and Luncheon

**Letters to the Editor**  
Michael Graham

**IN MEMORIAM**  
William 'Bert' Allsopp / Duncan Pedersen honoured

#### **IDRC Alumni Bulletin Archive on line**

**Statement of Revenues and Expenditures / Fiscal Year September 2015 – August 2016**

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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## From the Chair

Rob Robertson

### The Life of an NGO



Canadian NGOs have seen hard times lately. Big ones like Plan Canada and World Vision Canada have been pilloried for collaborating with mining companies in government funded projects. Kairos, an ecumenical NGO, became a political football when the government ended its funding. And small NGOs without a membership base or institutional support have struggled to find new ways to survive. Some, like the Canadian Hunger Foundation, have failed.

For three weeks last November I travelled across Malawi visiting church-supported projects. Donors have stopped providing support to its government and now channel it through NGOs. Their projects usually target the poorest of the poor, trying to nudge the development needle from the bottom by promoting better farming methods, accessing clean water, building small businesses, and teaching trades especially to AIDS orphans.

One of the priorities of the previous Conservative government was maternal and child health. As implementers of these projects Canadian NGOs have shown their worth in countries like India, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Malawi. One project I visited was so successful at the village level that during its first three years not one expectant mother died. It provided care and nutrition, advanced HIV testing and encouraged a greater male involvement in achieving successful beginnings in a country with one of the highest fertility rates in the world. Early indications are that support could be expanded by the current Liberal government to include a focus on children up to adolescence.



Before ODA was an acronym, non-governmental organizations were the main way that Canadians tangibly expressed their concern for developing regions. Many IDRC alumni were products of Canadian and international NGOs, bringing the sensibilities and skills they learned early in life into the Canadian public sector. Let's hope that hard times will become good times for NGOs, sustaining a vibrant community that achieves much for developing countries and prepares many to work effectively in our official development programs.



# Alumni News

Louise Behan

## Trip Report: No Cash No Curry



Louise and her pal John Sanders left for India on November 2, the day after the Alumni Luncheon. On November 8, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's audacious experiment with a currency change to tackle tax evasion and corruption in India was launched. [Overnight the 500 and 1000 Rupee notes ceased to be legal currency.](#)

Louise has reprised an IDRC tradition and sent us a 'Trip Report....

After arriving on November 3 in New Delhi and taking cash from ATMs we were hit, like everyone else, on November 8... the currency notes we had were worthless. Touring India, enjoying India has been part-time as we deal with the surprise...



Two and a half hours in a bank yields 2500 rupees (CA\$50) per transaction. A trip to Western Union with Canadian dollars and Yen in hand got us old notes again, so back to a bank with passports and waiting.

Struggles with long lineups at ATMs to get the allowed single 2000 rupee note (\$40) were averted when, as a woman and a senior, I went by myself to claim the privilege to cut to the front of the line, saving a vast amount of time and, once there, using two or three debit cards each time, trying not to feel guilty at jumping the queue on those in the long lineups where scuffles often happened.

Spending the money 'set us back' in more than one sense since change came in the old notes!

The challenge was to find hotels and restaurants that take credit or debit cards...in a cash-based society not always easy to find.

We discovered how Indians are coping: our Rajasthan driver would only accept foreign cash (\$400) or new notes. We covered the petrol charges as the gas stations took old notes and he finally agreed to take some old notes as the deadline to exchange them is the end of December. Several hotels with no credit machines agreed to take us to a relative's shop close by to pay there.

Seeking assistance from our Canadian bank revealed that the help available gave it a windfall! My bank switched me to a VIP transaction service charging \$25/month instead of \$5 for each \$40 transaction!

We thought we had found the sweet spot in Calcutta when a Singapore bank's ATM allowed foreign cards to withdraw 10,000 rupees (\$200) at a time; we felt rich and then poor again as the new 2000 rupee notes from that ATM were refused by taxis, rickshaws, corner stores, and restaurants because they cannot make change for such large notes.

We are fortunate to have friends and acquaintances here to help us out...dinners, changing money, offering loans. Many tourists and of course locals are not so fortunate. Three weeks into the change

and most ATMs still have lineups or no cash.

We only hope that the pain is worth the gain for India ...but it will be a long time before the situation improves. The demonetization may not totally cure corruption and the black market in India; it does seem likely to go a long way to making India a more cash-based society.

We head south to Kerala with a barrel of cash as we doubt it will be any easier there. An interesting moment for sure to be in India.



Louise meets Thomas the Tank Engine's Indian cousin and..

got her curry



## Réal Lavergne

Réal was elected President of [Fair Vote Canada](#) at the end of August 2016. He writes that as a result he is more involved than before at a higher level, meeting MPs, organizing events, giving presentations and monitoring the work of the special parliamentary committee on electoral reform. He was



[interviewed on CBC radio](#) when the report of the special all-committee on electoral reform was tabled.

More [pictures of Réal](#) .

## Kathryn Touré

[Kathryn](#) sent a wish for 2017 and an introduction to a remarkable 14-year-old.

### **We Are All Indigenous to this Planet; We All Come from the Same Earth...**

As 2017 approaches, I am thinking of Earth and caring for Earth, so our grandchildren and their grandchildren may walk this planet and enjoy its beauties and generations of human creativity and ingenuity. I am thinking of Water Protectors and of Earth Guardians and shifts in human consciousness. So in that spirit, I'd like to share these recent videos [\(1\)](#) and [\(2\)](#) of our young and prophetic brother Xiuhtezcatl Martinez.



## Where are they Now?

Erin O'Manique

### Still in development...closer to home.

The photo is a screen shot of Erin from a [video](#) of CBC Ottawa's promotion of *Project Give*, its annual Christmas drive to raise funds for the [Ottawa Food Bank](#).



In August 2016 Erin became the Executive Director of the [Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard](#) - a foodbank in east Ottawa that serves more than 2,200 people per month.

Erin's career spans over 30 years (21 with IDRC) focusing on sustainable, biodiverse food systems internationally and locally. In 2010 Erin led a policy writing team for the [Food for All](#) project of [Just Food](#) and stayed on for six years as the lead for

Operations. Erin stays involved with Just Food, being on the Board of [KLEO](#) (Karen Learning and Education Opportunities) and managing their [Karen Refugee Farm Program](#). She is working towards expanding the farming opportunities for the refugees from Syria and the Congo who come to the food bank. Erin is also a new member of the [Ottawa Food Policy Council](#).

Husband Kevan Shantz is the Director of the Goulbourn Recreation Complex in Stittsville. Son Jeremy has graduated from Carleton University with a degree in Religious Studies and is heading to China to teach English. Daughter Amy is in her fourth year at the School of Architecture at Carleton and after obtaining her B.Arch is going to continue on to get a degree in Architectural Engineering. Erin still sings in the [Ottawa Choral Society](#).

## The Rachel DesRosiers Award

### Rethinking Financial Inclusion as a strategy to enhance Empowerment in Poor Rural Women

The Rachel DesRosier Award for 2015 partnered with LACRO to support field work for students completing a Masters Degree researching the financial inclusion and financial education of rural women in Peru. The research was supervised by Carolina Trivelli at the [Instituto de Estudios Peruanos](#).



Among the poor in developing countries, the well-being of women is particularly vulnerable, for example with respect to health, education, freedom from domestic violence, and control over monetary resources. Providing poor women access to sound financial services such as saving, insurance and credit, and financial skills, are means to improve their capacity to better manage scarce resources, reducing poverty and increase their power to shape and lead their lives autonomously (empowerment). However, standard approaches have proven inadequate for a deeper understanding of power structures in poor communities. There is a need for research to further operationalize the different dimensions of the empowerment-financial inclusion relationship.



The focus of the IEP research was to outline the key elements of an analytical framework to clearly and rigorously account for mechanisms through which financial inclusion could have an impact on the empowerment of poor rural women.



The research was innovative, going beyond income generation and economic vulnerability, to focus on the potential of financial inclusion and financial education to increase women's ability to achieve goals across the multiple dimensions of their wellbeing. The research also recognizes that, though those goals could include income generation, they are not limited to that.

Key questions include: what personal / economic / social goals the women set; the range of factors that allow / deny women to set these goals for themselves; and, how financial inclusion and financial education could enhance their power to effectively achieve them.

The research will provide insights to rethink interventions for the financial inclusion and urge the empowerment of women as the main target and not an indirect outcome of the policy making processes.

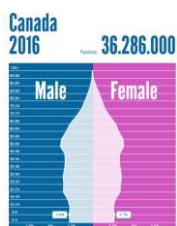
Jhonatan Clausen (IEP)

## The Luncheon and the learning

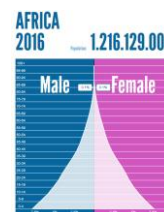
### Working for African Youth



Young Africa was the subject of this year's excellent presentation to the AGM by IDRC's Martha Melesse, a Senior Program Officer who focuses on youth employment issues. As illustrated in the accompanying chart, Africa has an extremely young population, in fact the youngest of any continent. This demographic fact means that by 2040 it will have the largest general population of any continent.



At present seventy-five percent of African youth work in the informal sector, with a disproportionate number of women represented in it. IDRC's programming in this area is focussed on identifying formal employment opportunities for youth and in particular addressing the barriers that hold women back. In general, the Centre and its partners are trying to fill "the evidence gap" on the school-to-employment transition and on how to impart employment skills to graduates. The research on



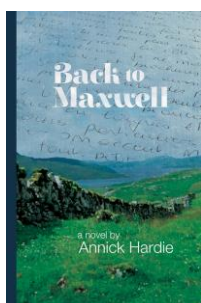
women includes how to reduce their "burden of care" with the premise that daycare may be the missing link in facilitating their entry into the formal labour market. As well the Centre is supporting research on entrepreneurship in nine African countries and focussing on how the capacity to be entrepreneurs can be built.

Rob Robertson

## Alumni in Print

*Back to Maxwell* a novel by Annick Hardie

The year is 1966, and young Michèle Vallier can hardly wait to start her first job as the French teacher's assistant in a rural school in Scotland. With her brand-new green trunk in tow, she leaves France and embarks on an adventure that will change her life. Over the next fourteen years, against the backdrop of the Borders, Edinburgh, the Highlands, and the Hebrides, she will discover much more about her new country than the kilts and bagpipes that have fed her imagination. Through tragedy, miscommunication, family secrets, and an enduring love for a man and his country, she will also discover her identity.



Packed with lovable characters and rich, sensual details, this lively novel will keep readers turning pages well into the night as they travel back and forth across the Channel, from the elegance of a French estate to the warmth of a Highlands kitchen on Hogmanay, discovering through the charming, spirited Michèle and the people she loves that the Auld Alliance between France and Scotland is still very much alive.

One hundred percent of the proceeds will go to La Maison des Collines, a palliative care hospice, a project that means a lot to the Hardie Family.

For copies contact [Annick Hardie](#)

## Gallery

Photos from the November 2 Alumni luncheon and AGM are found on the IDRC Alumni [Facebook page](#).

## Letters to the Editor



It was wonderful to read about Ilsa Zandstra's book about pigeons. My father, Harry, was an avid pigeon fancier since he was a child in Scotland. He continued his love of pigeon racing in Canada until he entered a nursing home in his early-90s. He is now 96. Pigeon racing was his life-long passion. He taught me all about this most interesting sport from the time I was old enough to enter the pigeon loft with him. I spent many days accompanying him on training runs (tosses), and used to tag along when he went to meetings to send the birds off to races (basketing). I used to have my "own" pigeons, and my favourite was always the "blue bar" that you chose to include with the note in the newsletter. So nice to see a book written about this sport, which few people in North America know much about. Cheers.

Mike Graham

## In Memoriam



**'Bert' Allsopp  
1927-2016**

Dr. William Herbert Lawrence "Bertie" Allsopp was born in British Guiana and joined the Agriculture Food and Nutrition Division of IDRC in 1972. He left IDRC in 1983 to continue his international work on the fishery with WHO and the University of British Columbia. He was Honorary Consul of Ghana in Vancouver BC.

Colleagues remember

Joe [Hulse] "negotiated" for some months while Bert was still with FAO in Ghana.

Joe had many "long" discussions with Bert while he was in Ghana, via short wave (CB) radio. Bert was an active short wave (ham radio) operator and was fully equipped in Ghana. We were not at IDRC, so we used an intermediary, an RCMP Officer in Ottawa who was also an avid ham radio operator. Bert would contact his ham friend in Ottawa, who would patch us into his discussion by telephone so that Joe could participate. All this was recorded by us and I had the dubious responsibility of getting these multi-hour discussions on paper, from the tapes. That did not work too well! Joe and Bert would go on for what seemed like hours, with each trying to outdo the other with his knowledge of short wave radio terminology where each word is spelled out in some sort of Morse code vernacular. i.e. alpha, roger, frank, etc. I hadn't been with IDRC very long and wondered what in hell I had gotten myself into.

Bert eventually joined IDRC in the Vancouver office on the UBC campus.

I have very fond memories of Bert, including a long visit to the Philippines to negotiate the Milkfish project at SEAFDEC with him. The 12 to 14 hours with him over the Pacific were also memorable. But he was a character with a great command of the English language and he was able to use it exceptionally well.

Gerry Bourrier

I was sorry to hear about the passing of Bert Allsopp.

I remember the first time we met, in 1980 at the IDRC office located on the UBC campus. When I mentioned that I had been hired into AFNS as an economist, Bert remarked, "be sure you do something useful", and then he took the time to explain to me why he believed fisheries was so important for assisting the poor. He was passionate about the link between fisheries and dealing with poverty.

And I enjoyed listening to him advocate for fisheries in a division that was dominated by plant breeders and soil scientists--Bert could 'hold his own' in those discussions, and I heard him once say, "in fisheries we don't just let our work be 'blown about by the wind' and then see what happens!" I thought that was simply brilliant.

Chris MacCormac



## Duncan Pedersen Honoured

Duncan was remembered in an In Memoriam in the *IDRC Alumni Bulletin* of April 2016



In October 2016 Duncan was given a [life time achievement award](#) / [Prix pour l'ensemble des réalisations](#) posthumously by the [Canadian Society for International Health](#) / [La Société canadienne de santé internationale](#).

Duncan's sons Lars and Eric whom I remember running around Health Sciences as youngsters, received the award on his behalf.

Lilah Moore

## 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

## IDRC ALUMNI STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FISCAL YEAR SEPTEMBER 2015 – AUGUST 2016

### Revenues

Membership Fees (2015-2016)	\$ 355.00
Memberships – prepaid (2016-2019)	740.00
AGM/Reception	1,275.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>2,370.00</b>

### Expenditures

AGM/Reception	1,078.23	
Office supplies, miscellaneous		305.67
Bank charges	190.82	
Award – LACRO	1,000.00	
Bulletin translation	300.00	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>2,874.72</b>	

Excess of Revenues over Expenditures	<u>\$ &lt;504.72&gt;</u>
Balance carried over from 2014-2015	<u>2,228.57</u>
Bank Balance at year end (31 August 2016)	<u>1,723.85</u>

**Approved on behalf of the Board:**

Gerald R. Bourrier \_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer  
Robert Robertson \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman

**31 August 2016**

The IDRC Alumni received donations from alumni totaling **\$25,500** during the fiscal year 2014-15. An additional amount of **\$5,000** was received this fiscal year. These donations totaling **\$30,500** were made in support of the Rachel DesRosiers Award program and are administered by IDRC, for logistical reasons. The Alumni will decide on an annual basis what proportion of these funds will be allocated to the Regional Office being recognized.



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at "IDRC Alumni" group and / or "IDRC" page.*



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

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