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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.

Bulletin

No. 63, January 2021

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Thanks to Michèle Wilson for Translation

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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
<<mailto:bici@sympatico.ca>>

From the Chair

Rob Robertson

Two Pandemics

For Canadians the COVID 19 experience is unique. We walk out our front door not knowing where the virus may find us. But for many in developing countries the experience is nothing new. They lived through the AIDS pandemic, and it was worse. For example, a small country like Malawi had a staggering infection rate of 30% in 1985 without the prospect of a vaccine to give it hope.

IDRC's response to the new pandemic echoes its response to the old one. Current projects are aimed at helping vulnerable populations to understand and cope with COVID's impact...including communities of refugees and displaced persons in Lebanon and the West Bank, and the Rohingya people.

The centrepiece of IDRC's response to the AIDS pandemic was the Fifth International AIDS Conference in Montreal in 1989, sponsored with WHO and Health Canada. The numbers reveal the monumental task the Centre undertook in managing it...10,000 delegates including 400 supported by Canada from developing countries; 1,300 journalists from around the world; numerous activist groups representing sex workers and people with AIDS who tried to occupy centre stage both literally and figuratively; and 500 workers including 40 from IDRC.



Ivan Head chaired the meeting, but the main organizational muscle was supplied by Claude Paul Boivin who was the conference's Executive Director and Lyse Lavictoire who was the Director of Operations. Claude Paul remembers the event as transforming such global gatherings from scientific conferences into popular conventions. He says, "It was the first time that we recognized that science was not offering a cure and the emphasis had to be on coping with the pandemic. The theme was really *Prevention, Prevention, Prevention.*" He believes the lasting legacy was to throw open the doors to the social dimension of HIV/AIDS, especially as it affected developing countries. In the pre-digital era this was achieved through the extensive use of press conferences to feed print and electronic media to raise public consciousness of the problem. The singular success of the Conference was accompanied by the realization of the tremendous effort required to achieve it. Asked at a Board meeting after the event if the Centre would consider managing future conferences of this kind, Ivan Head smiled and said, "Absolutely not."

Effective HIV/AIDS control is one of the victims of COVID 19. The new pandemic has reduced the capacity to test and treat the victims of the old one. Nevertheless, WHO now calls HIV/AIDS "a manageable chronic health condition." In the last two decades the number of deaths from AIDS has been cut in half, and its rate of prevalence in a once beleaguered country like Malawi is 9%, not 30%. But there are still nearly 40 million people in the world living with the infection and there is still no vaccine for it or other deadly illnesses in developing countries. The 2020 experience of Canadians may help us to empathize more fully with the apprehension of many in developing countries when they and their children walk out their own front door.

The David Hopper Prizes

The [David Hopper Prizes for Leadership in Research for Development](#) have been funded to mark the Centre's 50th anniversary and to recognize the good fortune of having [Dr. David Hopper](#), as its founding President.

The Hopper Prize goes to “individuals who have received support from IDRC that has been foundational to their careers and that has led to significant positive societal impact.”

At the Centre's Annual General Meeting in December 2020 the [2020 David Hopper prizes](#) were awarded to Teresa Mosquera-Vásquez and Rachid Hakkou.



“Teresa Mosquera-Vásquez was nominated by Universidad Nacional de Colombia where she is a professor in the Faculty of Agricultural Science. Teresa participated in two [Canadian International Food Security Research Fund \(CIFSRF\)](#) projects as the principal investigator for [Improving Potato Production for Increasing Food Security of Indigenous Communities in Colombia \(2012–2014\)](#) and [Scaling Up the Production of More Nutritious Yellow Potatoes in Colombia \(2015–2018\)](#). Her research focused on food security, agriculture, nutrition, and improving livelihoods, with a strong emphasis on the integration of social and natural sciences and women's empowerment. Under Teresa's leadership, researchers developed new potato varieties that are more nutritious, productive, and

disease resistant.”

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“Rachid Hakkou was nominated by the Université Cadi Ayyad in Morocco, where he is a professor in the Faculty of Sciences and Technology. He held the IDRC Research Chair in [Management and Stabilization of Mining and Industrial Waste \(2009–2016\)](#), led a workshop on [Sustainable Mining and Development in North and West Africa \(2017\)](#), and he was the principal investigator for the *Passage à grande échelle de la production de matériaux de construction à partir de déchets miniers recyclés* (2017–2018). Rachid is considered a pioneer of research on the management of mining waste in Morocco and is currently one of the top 10 global experts in his field. Morocco's long mining history has left behind more than 200 shuttered mines that pose significant environmental and health risks to surrounding communities.”



Bios from the [IDRC announcement of the Hopper Prizes](#)

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Who was David Hopper?

David Hopper was the first President of IDRC 1970-79.

IDRC alumni can be sorted under the Presidents of their time at the Centre. Understandably those who served under Dr. David Hopper are marked by the adventure that was the design and launch of a new and unprecedented Canadian Institution. Five decades on the challenges of international development remain as acute as ever, engaging another generation with the courage to believe that things can be better.



The David Hopper Prizes invoke history, paying homage to a remarkable Canadian in the field of international development while enabling another generation of young researchers to devote their talents to the search for knowledge and practice to meet the persistent challenges of poverty.

David Hopper came to IDRC from a long association with the Rockefeller Foundation as an Agricultural Economist. For a snapshot of Dr. Hopper's links to Canada's entry into the domain of research for international development through the External Aid Office under Maurice Strong, read the opening of Robert F. Chandler Jr.'s [*An Adventure in Applied Science: A History of the International Rice Research Institute*](#) (1992). There you will meet Stewart Peters the Canadian Civil Servant guiding IDRC from 'idea of something different' to an Act of Parliament, and Dr. Fred Bentley one of the original members of the IDRC Board of Directors, remembered today for the gift of the [Bentley Cropping Systems Fellowship](#).

Dr. Hopper's role in encouraging Canadian aid for [IRRI](#) presaged the Centre's encouraging the formation and supporting the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research ([CGIAR](#)).

Many of the first staff remember Dr. Hopper as a polymath able to enjoy and contribute to conversations across a range of disciplines. One area that stands out in retrospect was his very early belief in the contributions computers would make to all branches of research and to lowering barriers between the have and have not countries.



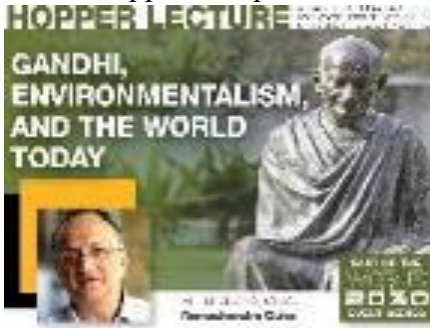
Dr. Hopper was the epitome of the 'early adopter'. "He introduced the first scientific computers into India and, while a member of the University of Toronto faculty, was part of the team that purchased and programmed the first large computer in Canada."*

This insight and passion was realized in part with the Centre's including an Information Sciences Division. In the era of very large expensive computers Dr. Hopper and Dr. John Woolston, the Director of ISD, delved and found Hewlett Packard's first efforts with smaller units. There were meetings with Mr. Packard at 60 Queen St. that would lead to the purchase of mini computers and the funding of the MINISIS programme.

With IDRC established and earning its reputation for demonstrating the necessity of support for development research for change to happen Dr. Hopper went on to the World Bank as Vice President of

the South Asia Regional Office.

Since 1983 IDRC's support for the annual [Hopper Lecture at The University of Guelph](#) has honoured Dr. David Hopper's respect for research to advance our understanding of international development.



Dr. Hopper died in 2011, an In Memoriam is in [IDRC Alumni Bulletin No. 26 December 2011](#)

¶ James Pfeifer a young lawyer and Geoffrey Oldham were part of the team
*Photo: The Bank's World, Vol 5 No 9 Sept 1986

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Alumni News

Amitav Rath

Amitav has been honoured with a *Distinguished Alumnus Award* for 2020 by his alma mater, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur, India.



The award is an appreciation of "... outstanding achievements, leadership, contribution to society, and peer recognition of our alumni who are a source of pride and inspiration ..."*



On graduation as an engineer from IIT Amitav graduated MSc and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley with specializations in economics, finance, statistics and complex systems.

After working with the Indian Institute of Management in Delhi, in 1981 Amitav joined IDRC's Science and Technology Policy Programme in the Social Sciences Division and later headed the Energy Policy Programme, a special grant to the Centre by Prime Minister Trudeau in 1982.

Amitav went on to found a consulting practice working over the past 30 years, in over 50 countries, in all the regions of the world. He has designed and led complex policy, programme and project development and evaluations and reviews for most development agencies including the World Bank, OECD, most United Nations agencies, many governments, firms and NGOs, and remained involved with IDRC from time to time.

He has continued his interest in research, teaching and mentoring younger people during his consulting work. He has worked as a visiting professor and researcher at over half a dozen universities and research organizations in various countries in the Americas, Europe and Africa.

*[The KGP Chronicle](#)

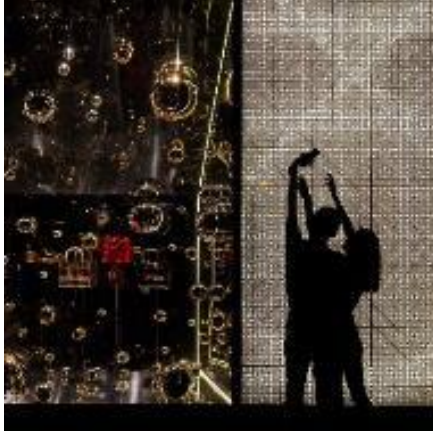
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David Glover

Hiding in Plain Sight



Silhouette Boy



Ion duo

David’s “Meet the Artist” event at the Shenkman Centre in Ottawa last November / December was closed when Ontario went into COVID lockdown.

[Click](#) to visit the attractive video Ottawa Arts created to promote the event.

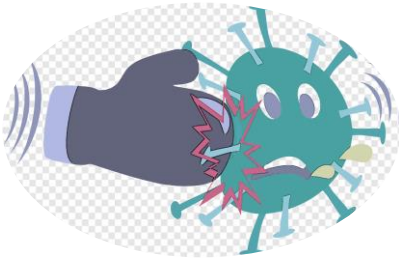
David has shared two photos from the exhibition. These will tempt a visit to his [website](#).

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COVID Coping

With the turn of the year we are on our way to that proverbial light at the end of the tunnel!

It’s would be interesting to hear what Alumni are doing to cope with COVID wherever you are, across Canada, across the globe.



Use the Bulletin to share experiences, the catching up, the insights, the Zooming, the books, the media both ancient (TV, radio, letters?) and modern (Netflix et al), that have got you through this interesting, challenging, bewildering time.



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In the news

CONNECTIONS

Dr. Francisco Sagasti



In November 2020 [Francisco Sagasti was elected President of Peru.](#)

David Runnalls



In November 2020 David Runnalls was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada “For his decades-long commitment to and influence in promoting environmentally sustainable development around the world.”

The Bulletin asked former President **Keith Bezanson** for an appreciation of the connection these outstanding individuals had with IDRC:

In both case this is exceptionally happy news for IDRC. I am very pleased to contribute a few reflections on these two appointments. I should preface, however, with full disclosure that both are close personal friends.

I have known **Francisco** since the early 1980s when I was CIDA Vice-President (Americas) and our collaboration and friendship deepened during my Ambassadorship in Peru (1985-1988) and in all subsequent years to this day. We have co-authored three books and a good number of articles and reports on development and provided joint consulting services to several international organizations. And we both share a deep and enduring affection for IDRC, its organizational and operational model and admiration for all it has contributed to the world since its establishment a half century ago.

IDRC has been a central part of Francisco’s life. He has served the Centre in perhaps more formal roles than anyone else over that entire period. He was among the very first cohort of researchers it supported, an Associate Programme Director and a Field Coordinator. He was also Strategy Advisor to me during my Presidency and he served two consecutive terms as a member of the Board of Governors during Maureen’s Presidency. Beyond those formal roles, however, in countless articles he has published and consultancies to international and national development organizations he has held up and recommended replication of IDRC’s core philosophy of helping to build endogenous capacities and its delivery model.

Although coincidental, it also seems fitting that he should assume the Presidency of his country in the year that IDRC celebrates its 50th anniversary. It furnishes, in my view, an additional and special reason for the celebration.

The awarding of the Order of Canada to **David** recognizes his lifetime leadership in Canada and internationally on environmental study and policy development. He was among the foremost architects of Canada’s International Institute for Sustainable Development ([IISD](#)) and served as its President for 11 years. Prior to that, he was Vice-President of the International Institute for Environment and

Development (incidentally, an organization founded by the legendary Barbara Ward who was also a force in the founding of IDRC and who served as a member of our inaugural Board of Governors). And following from the first Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 when UNDP's principal mission was rapidly being transformed to provide policy and technical support towards sustainable development for developing countries, David served as its Senior Advisor reporting directly to the Administrator. He has also over many years furnished extensive policy services on all aspects of sustainable development to both federal and provincial governments.

Much more could be added to the above listing. In commenting on David's OC award, the current President of IISD aptly and succinctly summarized David's contributions in stating that he led... "international sustainability efforts on many fronts, embedding environmental and social imperatives into international trade agendas and ensuring meaningful participation by all countries in multilateral negotiations on critical issues like climate change."

And like Francisco, David is also very much linked to IDRC. From 1993-1997 when the Centre had been designated Canada's contract for [Agenda 21](#) and was working to respond to the new demands and challenges this posed, David worked from my office as Senior Advisor.



This is another cause for celebration on our 50th anniversary.

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Soon after I joined IDRC in June 1979 I was handed a file for the Science and Technology Policy Instruments (STPI) project and told to get in touch with a Francisco Sagasti who was late completing a series of pamphlet-length publications to support the main STPI reports. I harassed a future president of Peru on STPI trivia.



I met Francisco over the years and had occasion to smile at the memory of him enduring a moment in an IDRC Programme Officer's apprenticeship.

Chris Smart

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Dr. Ronald Deibert



Dr. Deibert, 'renowned tech expert exploring the disturbing impact of social media' was the laureate for the [CBC's 2020 Massey Lecture](#) available in the book: *Reset: Reclaiming the Internet for Civil Society*.

Alumna Gisèle Morin-Labatut reminded your editor of another contact with future renown. Dr. Deibert came into IDRC in 2001 seeking IDRC support for his fledgling [Citizen Lab](#), in University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs. Ron, a recent PhD, and a group of new-age undergraduates were developing the tools and techniques to understand what we know call the 'black web'. I'm sure he was sent our way by President Maureen O'Neill knowing there had to be a fit with IDRC. It was a special initiative, we funded him and the [Centre continues to support his work](#).

Form the annals of the Special Initiatives programme.....

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University of Toronto, Department of Political Science: Real World Politics- a Project to Engage Canadian Youth in Global Citizen Networks (100933-013) (\$6,000)

This grant contributed to the overall costs of Real World Politics: A Project to Engage Canadian Youth in Global Citizen Networks. Real World Politics was an innovative and ambitious endeavour that involved six first year political science students at the University of Toronto who were selected by Professor Ronald Deibert to be part of an experiment on citizen networks. The students were given an office and small budget and charged with the task of creating an activist network in the area of global health and development. The students formed *Focus on Neglected Disease*, which lobbied the Canadian government to make a principled statement on neglected diseases at the 2001 G8 Summit in Genoa. From their Citizen Lab, which they staffed in shifts 24-hours a day, the students used information technology, popular media and community outreach events to promote their message, and travelled as observers to the G8 Summit. The project was professionally filmed as a six-part "real-life" tv series and a one-hour documentary. The series, ActivistTV, was viewed on TVOntario by more than 500,000 people and received excellent reviews. Although the students did not achieve their goals as a citizen's network, they felt that the experience was intensely valuable and came to appreciate many of the obstacles standing in the way of principled social change. Professor Deibert hopes to repeat the experiment in upcoming summers with students from universities across Canada and internationally, <http://www.citizenlab.org/>.

There have to be others?

The three connections featured above came to my attention because they were in the news. Serendipity!



We have all heard mention of other notable connections. Here's chance to see how many more were made over the Centre's fifty years.

Whom have you met with in the course of your IDRC work that the Bulletin should feature as a connection, a link to the wider world of what matters?

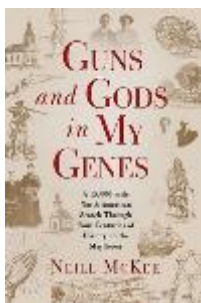
Ed.

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Alumni in Print

Neill McKee...back for the fourth time!

Guns and Gods in My Genes: A 15,000-mile North American search through four centuries of history.



Neill takes the reader through 400 years and 15,000 miles of an on-the-road adventure, discovering stories of his Scots-Irish ancestors in Canada, while uncovering their attitudes towards religion and guns. His adventure turns south and west as he follows the trail of his maternal grandfather, a Canadian preacher who married an American woman in Wisconsin, and braved the American Wild West. Much to his surprise, McKee finds his American ancestors were involved in every major conflict on North American soil: the Civil War, the American Revolution, and the French and Indian War. In the last chapters, he discovers and documents his Pilgrim ancestors who arrived on the *Mayflower*, landing at Plymouth in 1620, and their Puritan descendants who fought in the early Indian Wars of New England. he tracks down and tells the stories of the heroes, villains, rascals, as well as, the godly and ordinary folk in his genes, discovering many facts and exposing myths. He also lets readers in on a personal struggle: whether to apply for Canadian-United States dual citizenship or remain only a Canadian.

I loved the stories of the life and times of my paternal grandfather, a Methodist minister, who ventured into the American West as far as Newcastle, Wyoming, a place with a two-story brothel and a sheriff

who carried a gun with 20 notches on its handle. A wonderful historical memoir which, I believe, has universal appeal.

Catharine Neill, Richmond, British Columbia

The book can be purchased in paperback on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Indigo-Chapters or from [Neill's web site](#).

Geoffrey Oldham Scholarship 2020-21

The University of Sussex welcomed two new Geoffrey Oldham Memorial Scholars for 2020-21:



Sandra Juan Delgado (Mexico) is doing her masters in Sustainable Development and Franco Bermudez (Colombia) in Science & Technology policy.



Click for the [Geoffrey Oldham Memorial Scholarship's Supporter Report](#) from the University of Sussex where you will find letters from new arrivals and from students who have completed the degree, expressing in their own words exactly what the scholarship means for each of them.



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Letter to the Editor

Thank you for the newsletter! I wanted to react to your excellent joint editorial on vaccines from the October Newsletter for some time.

It has never been more important to take every opportunity to celebrate the benefits of vaccines and to recognize and encourage support for the sciences researching further advances.

As we all learn in earnest about the immune system, the more we discover, the more powerful and complex it is. It holds many surprises for sure. Hopefully, some good ones.

Jean-Marc Fleury

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Gallery



The photo of Claude Paul was taken by Rob on a walk, at a distance, in the woods...sharing war stories that inspired Rob's opener for this edition of the Bulletin.

One way of coping with COVID. Your editor's spouse, dancing the two metre minuet, with grandkids in the first months of the pandemic.



Use the Gallery as another opportunity to share how you are COVID Coping.



The IN MEMORIAM book on line

The Alumni IN MEMORIAM feature has been digitized. [Click](#) here to find photos and remembrances.

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Bulletin Archive on Line

[Past issues of the IDRC Alumni Bulletin](#), from the first edition in January 2003, are available on the [IDRC Alumni website](#). Bulletins for 1 to 26 are either English or French. From 27-39 they are bilingual and from 40 on, either English or French.



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