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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

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Thanks to Michèle Wilson for translation

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IDRC *Then* and *Now*

1. A Conversation on Education Research Then and Now



A Conversation on Education Research at IDRC: Then and Now*

On May 26 the Alumni in partnership with IDRC offered a Zoom event on the above topic; 64 alumni registered; 35 participated.



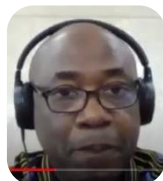
Claude Paul Boivin was Chair and Geneviève Leguerrier, Vice-President, Resources, and Chief Financial Officer, stood in for President Jean Lebel *hors combat* after an accident.

The Alumni voices for the ‘Then’ were: **Dr. Kenneth King**: former Associate Director, (1977-78) Social Sciences Division, Education; former director of the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh; Professor. Emeritus U of Edinburgh;



Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, former Associate Director, (1981-83), Social Sciences Division, Education; former Director of UNESCO's Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and former Chief of Education at UNICEF, New York - now semi-retired in Thailand.

Current IDRC voices for the ‘Now’ were: **Tricia Wind**, Program Leader, Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) in the Education and Science Division at IDRC and



Dr. Hamidou Boukary, Based in WARO, Senior Program Specialist with the GPE Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX), in the Education and Science Division at IDRC.

The Moderator was Alumna **Dr. Beatrice Avalos**: from 1979-80 was Assistant director of the Research Review and Advisory Group (RRAG) in Ottawa, and from 1981-1983 was IDRC Project Director of the IEA Classroom Environment Study, based in OISE, Toronto. Currently Professor of Education, Institute for Advanced Studies in Education, University of Chile.



Three questions focused discussion to link the past and the current support for Education Research at IDRC:

- *What were important topics for IDRC's education research in your era, how were those defined, and how did they evolve over time?*
- *Describe a typical project from your era. Who implemented it and what were the typical methodologies?*
- *What do you think was the greatest thing IDRC did in education research in your era?*

The 'voices for Then and Now' have kindly responded to the Bulletin's request for their 'After Action' thoughts on the conversation.

Sheldon: What was interesting was the (unplanned) continuity of focus and approaches over the decades -- from NORRAG's beginnings in the 1980s to the important role it is playing in IDRC's KIX activities of this decade; from the establishment of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development in the 1980s to IDRC's collaboration with the Group's successor, the Early Childhood Development Action Network; and from how the struggles to finance qualitative research in the 1980s may have helped make possible the diversity of research approaches financed today. After 15 years of pioneering IDRC work in Education between from about 1975-1990, and then a neglect of the field for over two decades, it just felt good that to see that education is back, alive and well, on IDRC's agenda.

Beatrice: The gathering of alumni, brought back to me how I was turned into a researcher on teachers as a result of my early experiences at IDRC. I arrived at the Centre in the late 1970s to work with Robert G. Myers from the Ford Foundation in what would be the starting point for an extraordinary initiative that has remained over time: The Research Review and Advisory Group (RRAG) known today as the Northern Research Review and Advisory Group (NORRAG). IDRC played a key role in hosting and supporting the initial steps of the group and the innovative set of reviews of research ranging from teachers to school learning and effectiveness. Today, I am glad to say, IDRC has resumed with vigour its support for education, of which an example is a set of studies in Latin America jointly supported by IDRC and the Interamerican Development Bank on Digital Tools to Teach Mathematics and Science in which a colleague at the University of Chile's Centre for Advanced Research in Education (CIAE) participated. Also important is IDRC's current support for the ADELA network in Uruguay centred on the Digitalization of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Good for IDRC!

Ken: I found the session stimulating. It was good to know that Bob Myers, Sheldon, Beatrice and I had started some hares running that were still running today.

Tricia: There has not been much change in the topics being addressed today compared to those of a few decades ago. KIX projects still cover the perennial challenges of access, equity, and quality in education. However, the top research priorities fall under the quality and equity domains as achievements under access have been notable. There have been significant improvements to education access in the last decades, but some issues remain. We continue to research topics such as alternative and accelerated programs for children who are out of school; support to girls to finish high school; analyzing equity issues that affect enrollment, completion.

Early childhood education has now been pushed to the front burner as a large body of literature has just provided abundant evidence of its foundational importance as foundation for subsequent learning in primary and secondary education.

Another educational priority that has gained prominence in the last two decades is the improvement of the quality and use of data in education system planning.

Hamidou: Two issues concerning the research environment or ecosystem are important for the relevance and quality of research.

The first is **who commissions and pays for the education research agenda** in the global south, more specifically in Africa. In the past technical and funding agencies by and large defined the agendas and paid for the research. Now an increasing number of ministries of education are commissioning research with their own funds. In Africa between 1996 to 2015 this shift from donor-driven to a co-constructed agenda started taking shape. IDRC, through KIX, has strengthened this shift by ensuring that almost all the KIX global and regional projects are the result of concerted efforts to ensure that their design and implementation are co-constructed with ministries of education and other stakeholders.

The second issue is **the national ecosystem or context in which research is being produced and consumed**. The past, was not favorable to the emergence of an indigenous culture of evidence-based decision making and planning; it was characterized by insufficient or weak capacity within research institutions, and little interest was paid to locally produced research, for use in policymaking and planning. This was captured by a 1997 publication entitled “Overlooked and Undervalued: A Synthesis of ERNWACA Reviews on the State of Education Research in West and Central Africa” edited by Richard Maclure, a former IDRC program Officer.

Efforts now work on strengthening the national research ecosystem by commissioning studies and granting money and opportunities to develop capacity.

Naser: I enjoyed this conversation and have learned a lot. Building on the issue of what remains the same and what has changed in research; the current demand-driven approach is key. We have learned that research is better when it is driven by researchers in the south. There is evidence to support this thanks to a rigorous evaluation. IDRC has developed the [Research Quality Plus](#) that captures key elements of good research and includes the importance of local researchers.



What has not changed is IDRC’s focus on social factors that determine how people and children learn using both qualitative and quantitative methods. IDRC has always shown concern for social equity and change by researching how marginalized people and children cope with challenges brought about by major disruptors such as disease, conflicts, and natural disasters.

IDRC grantees have always appreciated the quality of the staff and the Center’s flexibility and adaptation. IDRC values staying the course by embarking on long cycles of research spanning decades instead of 3 or 5 years. The Center also prides itself in the partnerships it builds to scale impact of its research. There is now a very strong focus on the science of scaling to help understanding of how evidence and innovation can be scaled up. In addition, there is now a focus on systems approach to identify key levers for transformative impact.

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“Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.”

H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History* (1920) vol. 2, ch. 41, pt. 4

Several Alumni have asked if a similar event might be done for other areas of the Centre’s work. If Alumni have suggestions, send them to the Alumni Executive at idrcalumniancienscrdi@gmail.com

*A video of the event is found [here](#).

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2: The End to History???

Preparing this Bulletin, with examples that invite comparison of *IDRC Then* and the *Now*, the daily news begs a visit to less well known IDRC efforts for ‘Empowerment Through Knowledge’.

There was a moment in time when IDRC decided to see if it could help Canada’s efforts to ameliorate some of the consequences of Russia’s transition from Empire to Republic. This was part of Canada’s modest contribution to the precept:

“For capitalism flourishes best in a mobile and egalitarian society”

Francis Fukuyama

The End of History and the Last Man

IDRC Alumni in Ukraine

Three Alumni were there ‘*Then*’

Doug Daniels writes:

The highly centralized nature of the Soviet Union meant that when Ukraine achieved its independence at the end of 1991, the government had to create new ministries from scratch. The Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) was created in 1992 but had few staff or activities. The Canadian government created a separate non-ODA fund at that time to support the development of the former Soviet bloc countries.



IDRC thought that some of its experience could be useful in the region and undertook to explore what it could do. After some modest projects linking Eastern European economists with Latin American economists who had helped guide their countries out of the economic collapse some had experienced in the 80's, there was an opportunity for IDRC to help develop Ukraine's MEP.

The Soviet Union prioritized industrial production over environmental protection. There were serious air and water pollution and other environmental problems in Ukraine but no capability to address them.

The government was receptive to help in this area. This was important as there was strong initial resistance to the involvement of outside agencies in the government and concern about IDRC's possible hidden agenda. Other agencies had been unable to develop any activities in Ukraine and noticing that IDRC was having success in developing rapport with the Ukrainian officials, they asked to join it in an initial reconnaissance mission.

The agreement IDRC signed with Ukraine just after their independence was the first that Ukraine signed with an outside agency. The \$5 million phase which Keith Bezanson brokered with the Canadian Eastern European fund covered all IDRC staff and other costs. IDRC was able to draw on the expertise of IDRC program officers from different divisions, paying all their costs from this program.

The project team promoted a collaborative team approach with Ukrainian scientists who had only worked in a central command and control system. An early activity was a major international expedition to survey for the first time the state of the Dniro (or Dniepro) River which is over 2000 kilometres long and provides 70% of Ukraine's drinking water. It helped lead to the National Program for the

rehabilitation of the Dnipro river basin and drinking water standards. Another project was the assessment of the water and sewer system in Zaporizhzhia. A large amount of the water system was being lost from defective pipes which were remediated with the use of new methods to find leaking pipes without the need to dig them up. Environmental audits of food processing plants produced recommendations to improve efficiency and cost effective purification technologies.

Jean H Guilmette writes:

The main challenge was to find a Ukrainian research centre capable of carrying out the research. Indeed, during communist times, every centre was directed by Moscow and did not know one another. We identified one centre with capacity to analyse the river flow of water; another to analyse the water on the river bank and last one who had trucks for the earth on the banks. The findings were important and surprising. Siltation had covered the river bottom with a layer of earth and dust. The water was quite drinkable, but the soil could not be disturbed because it was covering a layer of radioactive dust from the Chernobyl meltdown.

By the end of the program in 2003, many environmentally good policies were adopted in law; in effect making this programme a solid success.

Keith Bezanson writes:

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, several of Russia's constituent republics immediately became sovereign states. Canada was among the first to recognize them as independent countries and to establish embassies or consulates. To provide development support Canada created a non-ODA fund. That was not, however, its first preference which was to provide that support via the CIDA budget.

CIDA objected for two reasons. First, its budget was intended for ODA eligible countries and none of the ex-Soviet countries fell within the ODA criteria (determined and agreed by the Development Assistance Committee of OECD).

Second, Canada's year over year aid budget was declining in real terms. Adding additional countries to the Canadian eligibility list would almost certainly increase the opportunity costs to existing priority countries. CIDA's objections proved convincing and won the day, and a non-ODA fund was assigned to the Department of External Affairs.

The department was not equipped for or experienced in development project and programme management whereas IDRC was. The Centre held an indisputable comparative advantage in capacity building which was bound to be a highest priority need.

There was one further factor that was critical. The federal budget of February, 1992, eliminated numerous crown corporations and announced that IDRC would be converted into a "departmental corporation" (i.e. a department of government that would probably be lodged within CIDA). We were doing all we could in 1992 to overturn that decision and this was an opportunity to furnish compelling evidence to the government of the advantage of retaining IDRC as a crown agency with its independent Board of Governors. Quite simply, we saw the opportunity and seized it.

Did the IDRC project make a positive contribution by helping to build capacity? To that question I can only say that, with the leadership and commitment of Doug and then John H., I would be quite certain that was the case.

And the *'Now'*

Ukraine has made considerable progress in developing its' economy and society over the 30 years since independence although there still remain significant environmental problems.

Ukraine became an even larger supplier of grain and oilseeds to the international market as we can see from the devastating effect the blockade of shipping has had on food prices and food insecurity in developing countries.

Ukraine is suffering now from a devastating war but Ukrainians have shown that they can endure hardship and pick themselves up. They will do so again.

Doug

I tried in vain to, contact former Ukrainian friends and colleagues. Of course I am very sorry with what is happening in Ukraine. For example, I once visited Kharkiv which had a good centre of research. I see with chagrin all the Russian demolition. The same goes with Dnipropetrovsk. It is quite possible that the water which was clean is back to how it was in 1993.

I am also very preoccupied with the obvious danger of this escalating into a third world war.

Jean H

Given Ukraine's dreadful situation today, the more relevant question is whether any benefits of IDRC's well meant investment will be permanently eradicated or did they contribute, albeit modestly, to institutional strengthening sufficiently durable to endure and furnish one of the foundations for rebuilding the nation. Only time will tell.

What we do know, however, is that Ukraine's history of programmes and tragedies is also one of remarkable resilience and that resilience is in full evidence today. With this, I can only hope that the past is prologue.

Keith

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An IDRC Alumna in Russia

Pat Trites writes:

My connections in both Ukraine and Russia were related to my having worked for several years with the IDRC's Interdivisional AIDS Research Committee. This was part of the planning and organizing of the Montreal-based 5th International AIDS Conference. My work with the committee continued for several years after the conference ended. IDRC, with its focus on the psycho-social aspects of sexual health, had carved out a unique and previously neglected place for itself in the field of AIDS research.

Гласность?
? ? ? ? ?
Перестройка?

With this experience I was hired in 1994 as the Canadian manager of a project that the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) was developing in Russia. The Association assisted less-developed countries to develop their national public health associations. The emphasis was on seeking community involvement in establishing public health priorities. Russia was not a developing country but this emphasis fit well with the Canadian government's desire to assist Russia in its move to democracy. There was another link with IDRC in this project. Alumnus Jim Chauvin was a senior person in CPHA's International Programmes. He visited Russia to consult with our Russian

colleagues in the development of the RPHA project's second phase proposal.

My first visit to Russia was in the winter of 1995. Andrei, the Russian doctor who was hired to implement the project in Russia was a brilliant man, dedicated to being part of the process of democratization. He hired like-minded people and they were successful in stimulating the interest and support of a number of important administrative regions. With this support the Russian Public Health Association (RPHA) was formed. Over the project's duration a number of regional branches were also formed. As part of the effort to expand the Association's reach, I had the privilege of travelling with RPHA members from Karelia in the north to Novosibirsk in central Siberia. Creating links between Canada and Russia was important and we were successful in having many Canadian academics contribute to some of the conferences organized by the RPHA. Among those Canadian academics was Dr. Bertie Moe, a sociologist and former IDRC Alumna.

Like their Ukrainian cousins, the Russians were extremely proud of their country, its history and culture, and also like the Ukrainians they were a religious people. Religion might have been discouraged in Soviet times but it had not died. I was told that the Soviet government knew banning religion was futile.

And the '*Now*'

On February 24, 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine. For weeks prior, the world had watched with growing concern as tensions between the two countries escalated, when the invasion actually occurred the reaction was horror and almost disbelief. The potential for escalation of this conflict loomed large in everyone's thoughts, "Where will this end?"

A question posed by a young Russian friend, Constantine, keeps coming to mind. "Pat, how do you think of Russia - as European or Asian?" I suppose I had always thought of Russia as Eastern European, even though the bulk of it is within Asia. I wish I had delved more into what prompted that question. How well does the West really know Russia? They certainly seem to have a more spiritual side, even in the way they think of health, than do North Americans. Likewise, as with Ukrainians, they have more pride in their country and its history than we seem to have. Does this possibly relate to how the West might effectively encourage peace between Russia and Ukraine? Sometimes the tone we adopt sounds to me like lecturing and I'm not sure how effective that is with Russia.

Without question the Russian invasion of Ukraine, an independent country, was wrong. What more do we need to understand if we are to effectively communicate with both countries and help prevent an already terrible situation from becoming catastrophic?

Pat

Thanks to Tony Tillett for the nudge into this corner of IDRC *Then*.

§

"UN: War in Ukraine Could Push Millions into Hunger Worldwide"

[VoA News](#)

Claude Paul Boivin writes:

In August 1991 **Rob Robertson**, then the Associate General Counsel of the IDRC made a presentation to the International Human Rights Law Section.

I share the two opening and two closing paragraphs.

The full paper is found [here](#).

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THE RIGHT TO FOOD IN CANADA

A Monument to Human Rights was unveiled recently in downtown Ottawa. The ideals of "dignity" and "equality" carved in perfect marble are held aloft by imperfect human shapes made of rough concrete slabs. These rights have not been fully achieved and cannot be fully achieved by flawed humanity, but at least they are held up as ideals. But such ideals as the right to food or shelter are not held aloft in any monument, and they are not held aloft by the people of this country.



The Monument to Human Rights

The attitude of Canadians to economic and social rights is ambivalent. Canadians are highly supportive of universal access to education and health care, but they offer no guarantees to the hungry or the homeless. A genuine sense of charity towards the needy co-exists with a feeling that poverty may be self-indicted and that public attempts to end poverty may simply perpetuate it. Although Canada has subscribed internationally to the existence of a right to food, it has not implemented it domestically, either in fact or in law ...

... Now, if such a formula proves too heady a brew for all of us, there is at least one part-way measure which could be taken, and of course there may be more than one. I referred earlier to the Irish constitution. It has a section called "Directive Principles of Social Policy" and is specifically for the guidance of Parliament and "not cognizable by any court". However the courts have used them as a guide to interpreting the meaning of other parts of the constitution. Thus, the Canadian constitution could have a section which sets out basic economic rights as goals of policy. The courts could then have reference to this section in interpreting the ambit of the term "security of the person" or in determining which groups are covered by the equality rights section. In this way, the manner in which the Charter is used could remain the same, but the situations in which it could be used would be broadened.

No one writing about economic and social rights has ever claimed they were easy to implement, especially in the context of a federal system and especially at a time of economic restraint. But in spite of these problems, we have worse problems which can only be solved if we take the rights seriously. Canada has a history of hunger, from pre-Confederation times to the Great Depression to the current age of food banks. Clearly, the problem will not be going away without something changing, and what has to initiate that change is human rights law. Until activists and lawyers start holding up the words "right to food", just as those imperfect figures in the monument to human rights hold up other ideals, we will be living in a country with generations of children growing up scarred by hunger, and also a country which is flouting its obligations under international human rights law.

§

3: When Now Googles Then

Looking back to compare the "Then and Now" for IDRC's investments, news came in that **Neill McKee** has another book (his fourth since retiring) under development. Neill writes...

I am writing a memoir as an international filmmaker and multi-media producer with CUSO, IDRC, UNICEF and three US-based development agencies. I filmed hundreds of projects working with IDRC program staff and meeting and working with scientists in the field.

I was curious to see what I could learn about the results of the projects I filmed. Would I find evidence of positive, long-lasting benefits?

In the mid-1980s, I made a series of films for AFNS's Agroforestry Programme with forestry experts: Gilles Lessard, and his team: Derek Webb, Cherla Sastry, and Karim Oka. I traveled with Jean-Marc Fleury through West Africa to film trees and the lack of them.

We took scenes of desertification around the Ouallam, north of Niamey, Niger, in the Sahel. People were living precarious lives, for the rains had failed for years; the desert was advancing southward.

Then, few people talked about human-induced climate change; the culprit was the expanding African population's insatiable demand for firewood, which comprised 90 percent of their energy requirements.

Southeast of Zinder we found a very different Africa; a green land of crops dotted with trees. In the small town of Matamèye, where IDRC supported an experiment in community forestry with village woodlots, researchers had involved the villagers from the beginning. They learned about the ancient relationship between trees, crops, people and their animals. Small tree nurseries run by farmers produced up to 5,000 seedlings a year. Previously, the villagers considered planting trees to be the government's business. But here, they took responsibility for planting them, after being taught the correct methods, and how to care for seedlings by building simple barriers to keep animals away.

Establishing these village woodlots was challenging—ethnic affiliations, grazing rights, and complicated land ownership patterns had to be taken into account. We captured sequences of villagers cutting their trees for firewood and building materials, and pruning second growth to allow new shoots to grow more rapidly. The villagers were drawn together to reap the benefits. We filmed children being taught the importance of trees. I was inspired—this experiment was really working.

A Google search revealed IDRC's experimental community forestry work 50 year ago had not been wiped out by climate change:

[Rebuilding resilience in the Sahel: Regreening in the Maradi and Zinder regions of Niger reports...](#)

The societies and ecosystems of the Nigerien Sahel appeared increasingly vulnerable to climatic and economic uncertainty in the late twentieth century....drought and famine drove massive livestock losses and human migration and mortality. Soil erosion and tree loss reduced a woodland to a scrub steppe and fed a myth of the Sahara desert relentlessly advancing southward.

.... this myth has been shattered by the dramatic reforestation of more than 5 million hectares in the Maradi and Zinder Regions of Niger. No single actor, policy, or practice appears behind this successful regreening of the Sahel. Multiple actors, institutions and processes operated at different levels, times, and scales to initiate and sustain this reforestation trend.... Reversals toward de-forestation or reforestation were preceded by institutional changes in governance, then livelihoods and eventually in the biophysical environment.



I think it remarkable IDRC's mission achieved exactly what its founders hoped for— small investments in local researchers to find solutions that would be picked up and replicated by other development agencies, national governments, as well as the private sector.

I hope to complete and publish my new memoir in early 2023. It has many more examples of the early research IDRC supported, and is filled with entertaining stories of my experiences while traveling through many countries on all continents.

Neill McKee

See Neill's full article here: <https://www.neillmckeeauthor.com/post/revisiting-idrc-projects-i-filmed-during-1975-1987>

§

Neill's success with Google searches to link IDRC's *Then* with a *Development Now* encourages the following suggestion:

IDRC Alumni know the 'key words' for the *Then* of their efforts with IDRC. If they were to use these to search Google for *Now* / current connections other 'good IDRC stories' might emerge.

Anyone want to try?

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Alumni News

Back Office

A heartfelt thanks and farewell

"Dear Pauline,

On behalf of the Executive of the Alumni association, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to you for your immense contribution to our association as Executive Secretary for the past decade. Not only did you carry out your responsibilities in an exceptional manner, you also continually provided us all with wise counsel on matters big and small. Moreover, you were our group's 'corporate memory,' ensuring that we would embrace the future with a solid understanding of our past. All in all, you were the ideal team member - a totally dedicated worker, a supportive colleague and, with your boundless warmth and generosity, a good friend to all.

Pauline, we will miss you, but we applaud you for wanting to dedicate even more time to your charity work. You are a remarkable role-model for all retirees.

Thank you, and all the best in your future endeavours.

Claude Paul"



And a warm welcome to...



Lyse Lavictoire joined IDRC in 1973 and left in 1996. She was Head of Travel, Conference and Hospitality in Admin Services. She was “Jill of all trades”



David Balsom joined IDRC in 1980 and left in 2004. He was Executive Director of the Bellanet International Secretariat.



Claire Thompson came to IDRC in May 1990 and retired in February 2022 as Program Officer, Education and Science.

In October Lyse will be the Alumni Executive's Secretary. David and Claire join the as Members at Large.

Visit the Alumni website for the complete [Alumni Executive](#).

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Still involved and contributing....

“Retirement isn’t the end of the road, but just a turn in the road”. [[Google](#)]

A google search revealed that retirement is a ‘turn in the road’ for four Alumni.



[Don DeSavigny](#) Don helps out at the University of Ottawa and the [Bruyere Research Institute](#) with Jan, with their equity work, and with the [Canadian Neglected Tropical Diseases Network](#). He is also on the [Board of HealthBridge](#). Don also consults and travels extensively for the WHO Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research promoting systems thinking for health systems, and for the WHO Verbal Autopsy Reference Group supporting mortality surveillance in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems in several countries in Africa. Don is Professor Emeritus of [Health Systems Research at the University of Basel](#), [Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute](#), and continues to support graduate students there.



Eva is Co Chairs of the [Board of HealthBridge](#).

[Eva Rathbgaber](#) Eva continues to do international consulting on social aspects of science and technology, water, and gender. During the past few years she has worked extensively in Asia. She is an associate at the [School of International Development at the University of Ottawa](#) and serves on several Boards, recently stepping down as the Chair of the [Gender and Water Alliance](#), an international network of professionals working on different aspects of water.



Jan is not retired but retreading in directions that are fun, exciting or rewarding. She only does stuff with people she enjoys. She co directs a [WHO Collaborating Centre on Knowledge Translation](#), for Health Equity. She is adjunct prof at [U Ottawa in the School of Epidemiology and Public Health](#), where she coordinates a full term and intensive course in systems for health with input from many including Don and Carol.

[Jan Hatcher Roberts](#)

Jan has also enjoyed working with Fred Carden on many proposals and projects, surrounding ourselves with bright young professionals who keep us on our toes.

Grandkids in Nova Scotia keep her, and husband Allan, feeling blessed and joyful. Learning new skills like felting, mosaics and basket weaving as well as local politics keeps her challenged from a creative and advocacy point of view.



Carol Vlassoff

Carol is Co Chairs of the [Board of HealthBridge](#)

Carol's international career, including with IDRC, CIDA, and WHO, covered a range of areas, including reproductive health, HIV, and neglected tropical diseases. She began to explore issues around gender and health, to which she was introduced in the 1990s by Eva. In 2020 she received the [CanWaCH](#) award for [Measuring Impact in the Canadian Excellence in Global Health and Gender Equality competition](#). With Jan and Don she continues to work in research and training in public health as Adjunct Professor, [School of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Ottawa](#), and still consults with [PAHO/WHO](#) on selected health systems and services projects.

All...taking a turn in the road and still involved and contributing.

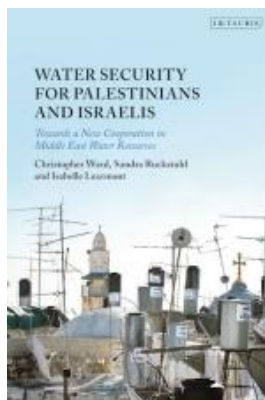
Alumni in Print

David Brooks...

...has been reading and reviewing:*



[Water: A biography](#): by Giulio Boccaletti, New York, Pantheon, 2021, 400pp., US\$30.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781524748234



[Water security for Palestinians and Israelis: Towards a new cooperation in Middle East water resources](#).

Ward, C., Ruckstuhl, S. and Learmont, I. 2022. London: I. B Tauris/Bloomsbury Publishing. ISBN 9780755637942 (Hardback £81/ebook £65).

*Title links go to Davis's reviews

Rachel DesRosiers Alumni Award 2022

As previously reported the Alumni now contributes 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

IN MEMORIAM



Diane Languedoc

1948 - 2022

Diane died on August 27. At IDRC Diane was a Programme Assistant Health Sciences. She is remembered as “an incredibly pleasant person, always with a beaming smile”.

It was Diane who welcomed me when I arrived at IDRC's Health Sciences Division in September 1983. It was on Queen Street, and she had been hired shortly before as a secretary to cover the program for professional and environmental health that I had to integrate.

It was my first public service position and I had a lot to learn.

It is thanks to Diane that I learned the B-A BA of this new function: bizarre notions; pre-ideas!, ideas, project summaries, and so on.

Since she was almost as new to the Center as I was, we had a lot of fun blundering together during this apprenticeship.

Thanks to her interpersonal skills, she facilitated my faster integration into IDRC. Always in a good mood and smiling, this single mother of two little girls never skimmed on the task, which did not prevent her work station from being characterized by infectious laughter at any time of the day.

We both evolved together in the OHEH program (we were the only members for several years).

A change of direction for the division coincided with major upheavals: reorganization of the division into three programs, move to the new offices on Albert Street, switch to computerized workstations, to name a few.

Diane overcame all these changes brilliantly and efficiently, and her good humor helped me do the same. It was around this time that I became director of the Health and Environment program, and several POs and two secretaries joined the group.

De facto, Diane assumed a more important task.

We continued to work together for a few years, and then came a well-deserved promotion opportunity for her in the communications division

This period was also one of great change in management and government austerity that encouraged employees to retire without financial penalties.

Like many of her colleagues Diane accepted the offer, returning to IDRC as a temporary employee for a time.

When I left for Dakar in 2001, we lost sight of each other. I thank her very much for many wonderful years of complicity and success at work.

Gilles Forget

Diane's obituary is found [here](#).

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Rosemary Proctor
1945-2022

Rosemary died on February 22, 2022. “Rosemary was born in 1945 in New Bedford, Massachusetts... became determined to always live in places where there were sidewalks and libraries. She studied for a BA at American University, School of International Service; this included a year at the University of Stockholm.

In 1968 Rosemary and her husband left the United States and found humanitarian asylum in Sweden...where she worked for the newly established Stockholm International Peace Research Institute...so began a long career that spanned the globe; always with the goal of achieving equity and good for others.

In 1972 Rosemary and her husband immigrated to Canada. Rosemary returned to university earning an MSW in social policy. Her productive and successful career in public service ended in 1995. This enabled a career change and from 1996 to 2000 she lived in Johannesburg and worked in a Canadian-funded project to assist the newly elected South African government. All of the skills and abilities she had used improving the lives of Canadians were then applied to the betterment of emerging democracies...*”

[*Obituary published by The Globe and Mail from Feb. 25 to Mar. 1, 2022](#)

Colleagues remember:

Rosemary loved being in South Africa and immersed in the transition to a more just and democratic form of government. She was a political junkie in an intensely political environment that was full of excitement and extraordinary hope and she relished her encounters with many of the key actors and her role in linking them with Canadian partners. Beyond that she loved exploring the wonders that the country had to offer - cultural and geographic. Her stay in South Africa had the added benefit of providing a platform for the many years of successful international consulting work that followed.

Kate Wild

I had the pleasure of working with Rosemary for the South Africa/Canada Programme on Governance in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 1996-2000.

I learned she is a champion for human rights and believed strongly that all people should have access to the same opportunities for education and health.

Rosemary was a wonderful storyteller and through dinners together, evolving from colleagues to friends, I also learned about her work for Aboriginal child welfare in Toronto, her distaste for war, and how her husband and her left the United States to avoid being drafted to the Vietnam War and other

tales of her travels and family life.

I will miss the Christmas cards and Rosemary's amazing life stories.

Anthony (Tony) Pan

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When Alumni visit the IN MEMORIAM site and find a former colleague is not remembered they ask for an entry. Former AFNS colleagues provided the links that lead the information needed to remember Dr. Gilles Lessard. Thanks to Julie Gohier at IDRC for this remembrance of her father.



Gilles Louis Lessard
1935 - 1999

Gilles studied for his Bachelor of Science Degree at the Royal Military College in Saint-Jean, Quebec and went on to be a Professional Forestry Engineer. He earned an MBA from McGill University.

Gilles joined IDRC in 1971 as Associate Director for Forestry with the Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Sciences Division (AFNS). He developed the Centre's programme in forestry research while working in Québec City and relocated to Ottawa in 1978.

An example of the magnitude of Gille's contributions in Africa is found in a paper he presented in May 27, 1986 to the World Commission on Environment and Development on the importance of social forestry in the African Environment, "Since 1972, IDRC has supported over 75 forestry research projects in 18 African countries."

In 1989, Gilles left IDRC to join CIDA's Small and Medium Enterprises Policy Branch, where he worked until his retirement in 1998.

Gilles always enjoyed the outdoors, especially camping and canoeing. When young he spent summers doing forest inventories in Lac St-Jean. When 28 years old, he wanted to see the world, and bought an around the world plane ticket. He could not have predicted that he would one day be working at IDRC and travelling to developing countries many times a year!

Gilles had a passion for life and an unwavering curiosity for "how things work." He died in December 1999 after a courageous battle with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma that came back after a 20 year remission.

Julie Gohier

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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