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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. 70 January 2023

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Thanks to Michèle Wilson for translation

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A Malthusian Moment?



The power of population is so superior to the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race. [*An Essay on The Principle of Population*, 1798: chpt VII, para 20, lines 2-4)

[For more on Malthus](#)

We are 8 billion!



Reading the [news on November 15, 2022](#), the UN reporting there are 8 billion of us on the planet had me remembering that the Resource Clock in the foyer at IDRC HQ, 250 Albert Street had been noticed when the population reached 5 billion on July 12, 1987.

By happy coincidence alumna Anne Whyte, urged by her daughter, who, reading the population news, wrote to asked what had happened to the clock and sharing, “watching that clock tick over was one of her strong and abiding memories of visits to IDRC when she was a young child.”

The clock was still in place in 1999 when IDRC produced the brochure: [The Resource Clock](#), with the clock showing 6 billion!



So, Dear Readers, I share the question: "Does anyone know what happened to the IDRC Resource Clock?"

Anne remembers “pausing by the large stainless steel clock many times in the lobby and I recall Ivan's satisfaction when it was first installed and linked to the UN population database. The only one in Canada! A ticking symbol of IDRC's international status in bureaucratic Ottawa.”

Neither of us recalls the inauguration of the clock but we do remember a story of Geoff Hawtin critiquing the "algorithm" that linked the count of population increase to that for the decrease in arable land. He was deemed correct in his analysis and the clock disappeared for a fix.

With help from the always impressive people in the IDRC Library I was able to find the IDRC, on July 8, 1987, hosting a Media Seminar to raise awareness of our Planet reaching the 5 billion population [Plimsoll Line](#).

IDRC President Ivan Head opened the event and Anne, as Director of the Social Sciences Division, was Chairman (sic) of the panel:

Africa - Mpembele Sala-Diakanda, Director of the Institute for

Training and Demographic Research (IFORD), Cameroon

Asia - Dr. Anchalee Singhanetra-Renard, professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Chiang Mai University in Thailand

Latin America - Jose Alberto Magno de Carvalho, Director of the Faculty of Economic Sciences at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Canada - Alan Simmons, President, Canadian Population Society

IDRC members of staff were busy answering question from TV, radio and press. In addition to Ivan Head and Anne; Melba Gomez, Alan Simmons, James Mullin, Joseph Hulse, Marc Farren and a friend of the Centre, Morris Strong were busy.

The Headlines / lessons taken from the briefings were mixed: *City Cheers baby No. 5 billion* (Ottawa Sunday Herald); *Five billion population – mark – cause for concern not celebration* (Cambridge Daily Reporter); *Prospects bleak for world's five billionth child* (Windsor Star)...

Of all that was written, this, from the Toronto Star, captures the essence of the news on July 15, 1987 and makes the link to the news of November 15, 2022.

“But as Head and other thinkers well recognize, there is a deeper, more widespread global problem: poverty. Without solutions to feeding the world's hungry, there is small chance of addressing issues of war, peace and the environment.

Solutions mean change – change that is not even being debated in the assemblies and parliaments of industrialized nations, comfortable as they are. As the World Commission on Environment and Development noted: “Those responsible for managing natural resources and protecting the environment are institutionally separated from those responsible for managing the economy. The real world of interlocked economic and ecological systems will not change: the policies and institutions concerned must.”

What is the world coming to? The answer, for better or worse: A place of our own making.”

Not quite *plus ça change*: current conversations do accept the inextricable link that binds economics-ecology as key to the planet's environment.

Let's give Malthus the last word:

“Evil exists in the world not to create despair but activity.” [chpt XIX, para15, line 1]

[Click](#) for the July 15, 1987 Media Seminar clipping archive (144 pages).

Thanks to Anne and daughter, Jo, for this trip in the Time Machine.

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Changes

Over, but not out!

With this edition, after [46](#) since September 2011, **Chris Smart** will retire as editor of the Bulletin and as a member of the Alumni Association Executive. For close to two decades, Chris has served the IDRC Alumni in many different and important ways, including coordinating the Alumni grants, updating the Alumni website, liaising with the Centre, initiating webinars and generally providing wise input to our group discussions and decisions. Chris did all of that, and still found time to take on the big mandate of editing the newsletter which is so important to our association as, along with the Alumni Facebook page, the most effective vehicle to communicate with our members. With all that he has done, it would be an understatement to say that Chris has been an integral part of the association. What Chris has been all of these years is an inspirational leader, a dedicated worker and a dear colleague. We will miss him.

An invitation to Alumni members to join our Executive and help out with communications.

With Chris's departure, we want to ensure that we can continue to have solid lines of communications with our members. Your executive is considering options.

Ideally, we would welcome someone volunteering to join the executive to coordinate communications. We are open to different approaches, including maintaining the Bulletin or merging it into our Facebook page. In the latter option, you would work closely with Shaun Bona who as a member of the executive manages our Facebook presence.

Interested in helping us out with our communications? Write to us at

idrcalumniancienscrdi@gmail.com

Farewells:

I would also like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention that, in addition to Chris, two other Executive members will be stepping down from their roles - they are **Gerry Bourrier** and **Eyra Edington**. Gerry is the only member of the executive who has served uninterrupted since the launch of the Alumni Association 20 years ago. That is quite a record. For those 20 years, Gerry served as Treasurer and played major roles in coordinating our annual meetings and simply keeping the association moving forward. With his long and broad experience as an Ottawa-based program director and Regional Director in Dakar, Gerry was also our 'Corporate memory'.

Eyra was our coordinator of memberships and in that role took on the responsibility of promoting the association, recruiting members and keeping up to date the list of our membership - all key roles in keeping the association going.

On your behalf, and on behalf of my fellow Alumni Executive members, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to Chris, Gerry and Eyra for their immense contributions to our association.

We celebrate and applaud all that they have done to keep our IDRC community alive and wish all three of them the very best in the future.

Giving Chris the last word...

Onward!

Claude Paul Boivin for the Alumni Executive

Sylvia Cadena



While developing the Tropical Whitefly Project for the CGIAR based at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture - CIAT, a nomination call from our late colleague Alicia Richero launched Sylvia Cadena's remarkable career.

In June 2003 and as a Young Professional Awardee, Sylvia was assigned to work in Montevideo, Uruguay alongside Ben Petrazzini, Director of the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas. At ICA, Sylvia supported a wireless networks development project called WiLAC to develop a Map of Connectivity in the Americas, the establishment of the FRIDA

Program (the regional fund for digital innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean), and various other initiatives.

Sylvia's partner, Germán Valdez, was at the Latin American and Caribbean Network Information Centre (LACNIC) office in Montevideo, addressing internet policy development and enhancing support to the technical community in the region. When the IDRC assignment ended, Sylvia was offered short-term contracts to support projects in the region. For five years, they lived in Uruguay where their son Gabriel was born.

The family moved to Brisbane in 2008 and, by the time Sylvia arrived, IDRC was working with the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC) and the Internet Society on the creation of the Information Society Innovation Asia Fund. APNIC offered her a Project Officer position to establish the ISIF Asia fund, which is now in its 15th year of operation and known as one of the region's most established internet development funds. APNIC is an open, member-based, not-for-profit organisation whose primary role is to distribute and manage internet number resources (IP addresses and Autonomous System Numbers) in the region's fifty-six economies.

In 2010 Sylvia led the negotiations with IDRC and with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) to establish the Seed Alliance, a collaboration between the FRIDA Program and the ISIF Asia fund. The Alliance invested in internet development and innovation across the global south from 2011 until 2017 and supported the development of the FIRE Program, the African Fund for Internet Research and Education.

After ten years of managing the fund, Sylvia was appointed Head of Programs at the start of the APNIC Foundation in December 2016, working on the management, design, and implementation of collaborative programs and projects. The Foundation's mission is to increase investment in internet development in the Asia Pacific region, through education and training, human capacity building, community development, research, and related projects and activities. Now, Sylvia is Head of Programs and Partnerships, coordinating the investment strategy of the Foundation across three main areas: Inclusion, Infrastructure, and Knowledge through a variety of funding mechanisms, as well as supporting the establishment of partnerships with donors and philanthropists interested in the development of the Internet.

Sylvia writes ...

"The staff at the IDRC Montevideo office and LACNIC became our family; since we arrived and we have remained in contact ever since... we miss them dearly.

"IDRC has always been there for me throughout my career. They were the very first donor that

supported the work I was doing at Colnodo with the Neighborhood Information Units in Colombia back in the early 90s (an earlier version of a telecentre) and continued to offer me opportunities to learn and meet people working on internet development until now.”

“Our son Gabriel is studying nursing at the University of Queensland. He is an avid musician and baseball player and, despite the pandemic and a few injuries that have gotten in the way, he was part of the U18 National Baseball Squad”.

Shaun Bona

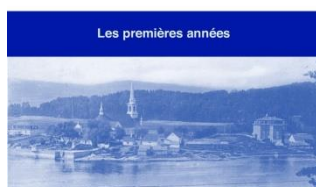
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Alumni in Print

Sylvain Dufour

Sylvain Dufour

La Malbaie



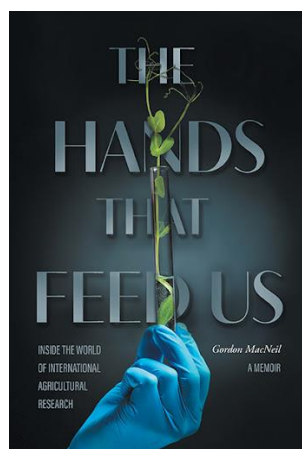
La Malbaie; les premières années (La Malbaie; the first years)

The book recounts the arduous beginnings of La Malbaie during the French Regime. He introduces the families who lived or worked there between 1687 and 1760, as well as the pioneers who settled there in the early years of the English Regime.

The book (soft cover, 120 pages) is available online at the [Musée de Charlevoix](#) and physically at the Museum, the TOU & Cie store in La Malbaie, or from the author for friends in the Ottawa-Gatineau area.

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Gordon MacNeil



[The Hands that Feed Us: Inside the World of International Agricultural Research](#), Friesen Press Bookstore, e Book 978-1-03-914817-8: Paper 978-1-03-914815-4: Hardcover 978-1-03-914816-1.

Gordon offers valuable and insightful details into the world of international agricultural finance, delving into his perspective and analysis of the inner workings of some of the most complex organizational systems and groups in the world.

“It is very engaging and an enjoyable read. Added to that it has real substance on the history of the CG. At a minimum I hope it finishes up in key libraries for future scholars.”



Derek Byerlee Former lead economist at the World Bank, Fellow of the American Association of Agricultural Economists, and Chair of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

A thorough discussion of a little-known agriculture research world that will appeal to experts”.

[Kirkus Reviews](#)

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Geoffrey Oldham Memorial Scholarships

2022 saw the arrival of the final recipient of the Geoffrey Oldham Memorial Scholarship. Mohammad Omer Aiuby from Afghanistan is enrolled for the course, MSc in Sustainable Development, in the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex.

Mohammad writes: “I noticed over a number of years, while working for a range of organisations (CSOs, NGOs and UN agencies), that there is an enormous gap in the understanding of the interrelationships and linkages between development issues such as poverty, human rights, environmental sustainability, social protection, economic growth and local governance. Because the presence of international expertise and funding from the international community has declined, Afghanistan desperately needs nationals who can think more broadly and undertake the responsibility for the country’s stability and development.”



A special commemorative report, [*Geoffrey Oldham Memorial Scholarship: The scholars: where are they now?*](#) offers insight on the Oldham scholars’ current activities and outlines the impact that the Scholarship has had on their lives so far.

The report reflects on the life-changing opportunities that the Scholarship Fund has provided.

“Geoff’s work over nearly six decades helped to bring scientific and technological advances to some of the populations around the world that needed them most, and to direct technological efforts towards long-term, sustainable patterns of development.

...it’s so great to hear the news from Aida, Marisa, Rodrigo, Carolina, Qi, Kennedy, Juan, Sandra, Anne and Omer... we learn how their careers have been propelled forward by their time at Sussex, into areas that Geoff cared deeply about – science and technology for development, gender and inclusion, international collaboration and the environment. All of them are set to make a huge impact on the nations and communities with whom they are working.”

Dr. Adrian Ely, Reader in Technology and Sustainability, SPRU
Professor Jeremy Hall, Director, SPRU



Anne Kagota, Brenda Oldham, Adrian Ely, Keith Oldham

Gallery



After a wee hiatus, the Nova Scotia IDRC Alumni Chapter met on the 14th of October. The gathering was cordially hosted by Bev and Rick Chataway at their Cherry Hill summer home. Guests feasted on local homecooked cuisine that was interwoven with family chronicles, IDRC memories, travel experiences, etcetera.

Left to Right / Nancy Hutchinson, Shaun Bona, and Bev Chataway

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IN MEMORIAM



Lyell Shields
1940 - 2022

Lyell was with IDRC from 1990-1992 as Head of Audio Visual Development, focussing on film and responsible for raising funds from external sources needed for film development. He had years of experience in distribution of film and television internationally. Prior to joining IDRC he was in marketing for TV Ontario.

Lyell was Executive Producer of the IDRC sponsored Vision TV's "South North" series with IDRC Board Chair Flora Macdonald. When the WETV Secretariat was created in 1992 Lyell joined in a similar role and continued with WETV off and on until 2000.

Lyell was a film and television freelancer in production, marketing and distribution. He was a generous and creative force, deeply concerned with social justice, feminist issues, equality and the creative human spirit.

David Nostbakken

"Lyell spent many years working in fashion and film, capturing important moments all around the world, from protests in Brazil to Christmas morning in the Millbrook Valley. He was a proud activist and outspoken feminist, with an open mind and a vibrant heart. From watering the roots of the vegetables in his garden, to tending to his family through shared meals, warm homes and playful adventure, Lyell's spirit radiated passion and kindness"

[Lyell's obituary](#)

A colleague remembers:

Lyell and I worked together at IDRC for a number of years. When he first arrived, he introduced himself and proudly stated that he was from Rosetown, Saskatchewan, the home of M.J. Coldwell, When I heard

this, I could not help but correct Lyell, telling him that Rosetown was not Coldwell's home, but rather the riding he represented in Parliament. When Lyell asked me how I know this, I told him that M.J. Coldwell was my grandfather. From that moment on, we were IDRC friends!

During those years, I visited his place on Cooper Street (I believe) a number of times, and made one memorable trip with my wife and daughters to the Shields farm outside of Kaladar. Lyell was always smiling, good-natured and welcoming.

One day, he very kindly presented me with two beautiful black-and-white framed photos: one of a grain silo and another of an old tractor in a farmer's field in Saskatchewan. He asked that I give these to my mother, M.J.'s daughter, as a gift from him. I did so, and they hung proudly in my parents' home for many years. These two photos now can be admired in the dining room of my own family home, and are a wonderful reminder of Lyell and our friendship.

Bill Carman

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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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