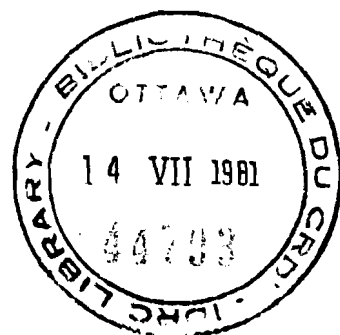


23.

Appropriate IDRC policies and practices in the least developed countries (the African experience)

APPROPRIATE IDRC POLICIES AND PRACTICES
IN THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
(The African Experience)

This Report was prepared by
Dr. D.G. Simpson and Mr. E.A. Price
for the Office of the Vice-President Planning
February 27, 1980.



341.1
IDRC
S 5

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views of the IDRC.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/12/2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I <u>SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</u>	1
II <u>INTRODUCTION</u>	10
1. Rationale And Terms Of Reference	10
2. Approach To Preparing The Report	10
III <u>PRESENT CENTRE PROJECT SUPPORT POLICIES AND PRACTICES</u>	14
1. Mandate	14
2. Project Criteria	14
3. General Operating Principles And Mechanisms	15
IV <u>THE CASE FOR OPERATING DIFFERENTLY IN AFRICA</u>	17
1. Should IDRC Have Policies And Practices In Africa Different From Those In The Rest Of The World?	17
2. To What Extent Is The IDRC's Difficulty In Identifying Effective Research Projects Caused By A Shortage Of Research Institu- tions And Researchers?	18
3. What Are Other Difficulties Of Functioning In Africa?	23
(a) Management	23
(b) Lack Of Funds	24
(c) Handling Of Funds And Purchases And Use Of Material And Equipment	25
(d) Maintenance	28
(e) Communications	28
(f) Political Considerations	29

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

	<u>Page</u>
4. Has The IDRC Allocated A Reasonable Proportion Of Its Budget To African Projects?	29
5. Are There Many Countries In Africa In Which The IDRC Has Few, Or No, Projects?	31
V <u>CRITIQUE OF IDRC POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN TERMS OF THEIR APPROPRIATENESS FOR IDRC OBJECTIVES IN AFRICA</u>	<u>33</u>
1. Centre Appreciation Of Functioning In Africa.	33
Does Centre Management (Including The Board Of Governors) Understand The Technical And Administrative Difficulties Of Functioning In Africa?	
2. The IDRC As An Organization	34
Does The IDRC's Structure And Present Style Affect Its Ability To Function In Africa?	
(a) The Ottawa Office	34
(b) Regional Offices	38
(c) Overseas Staff Posting	42
3. Project Selection, Development And Monitoring	43
(a) To What Extent Is It Feasible Only To Support Projects Which Reflect Local Priorities (The Question Of "Responsiveness -vs- Suggestiveness")?	43
(b) Are IDRC Projects Seen By Recipients As "Their" Projects Or As "Our" Projects?	47
(c) What Kinds Of Research Should The IDRC Support? Should The Research Projects Have To Be Tied Directly To Some Potential Action?	48

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

	<u>Page</u>
(d) Who Should IDRC Support: Universities Or Government Research Groups?	51
(e) Should IDRC Staff Assist Local Researchers In Writing Project Proposals?	53
(f) Is There A Shortage Of Profes- sional Staff Time To Develop And Monitor Projects?	54
(g) Summation	58
4. Administration Of Grant Funds	58
Should The IDRC Administer A Higher Proportion Of Grant Funds?	
5. "Topping Up"	62
Should There Be "Topping Up" Of Salaries?	
6. Expatriate Technical Assistance	65
Should The IDRC Support Technical Assistance And The Use Of Expatriates?	
7. Institution Building	68
Should There Be A Role For The IDRC In Institution Building?	
8. Networks	68
Should The Centre Use The "Network" As A Major Vehicle For Supporting Research; What Other Cooperative Mechanisms Might Be Tried?	
9. Research Results -vs- Training	72
(a) Should The Focus Of Centre Activity And Expectation Be On Obtaining Useful Research Results Or On Building Local Capacity?	72

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

	<u>Page</u>
(b) What Training Of African Researchers Should The IDRC Be Supporting?	75
10. Expansion Or Concentration	78
Should The IDRC Tend To Concentrate Its African Work In Terms Of Both Geography And Programs?	
11. Size Of Projects	79
Is There Any Best Size For Projects Supported In Africa?	
12. Term Of Projects	81
Should The IDRC Consider Long Term Support Of Projects?	
13. Evaluation	83
How, And For What Purpose, Should The IDRC Evaluate Projects?	
14. Project Results Follow-Up	84
What Steps Are, Or Should, Be Taken To See That Promising Research Results Are Followed-Up?	
VI <u>CONCLUSION</u>	85

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The Program of Work and Budget submitted by the Office of the Vice President for Planning in May 1979 proposed that a number of Centre-wide studies be initiated to provide a comprehensive review of issues and policies which affect the Centre's performance.

One of the first areas to be considered was whether or not changes in Centre policies and practices might allow for increased support for the development of scientific capabilities in the least developed countries. The desire to maximize support for the poorest communities is a position which the Board of the Centre has generally encouraged.

For reasons of time, convenience and economics the initial study was limited to an examination of IDRC operations in Africa, the reasoning being that in terms of research capabilities most African nations could be considered to have limited scientific infrastructures. This focus also coincided with the view expressed by some Centre staff that, although it is difficult to generalize, working in Africa is considerably different from working in much of Asia and Latin America and thus it was worthwhile to look specifically at Centre policies and practices in Africa.

While this study will focus then only on Africa, the Report may be circulated to the other Regional Offices for discussion and comment. If it is felt that conditions in the least developed countries of other regions are similar, it may then be possible to generalize some of the main conclusions.

Centre staff have acquired considerable experience in supporting research scientists and research institutions in Africa and one of the intentions of the Report was to provide a forum for them to express their views on how the Centre might best achieve its objectives in Africa.

In preparation for writing the Report interviews were held with IDRC staff past and present and with a great number of other people involved in various ways with Centre projects in Africa and with international development in general. People were most generous with their time and in almost all cases were open and frank with their comments. Even when persons were expressing comments adversely critical of the IDRC, it was clear that they cared about the organization, wanted to see it learn from its mistakes and were anxious that it continue to build on past strengths.

Staff members were pleased to have the opportunity to express their ideas through such a study but many were cynical about the extent to which the Board would seriously consider their suggestions in determining future policy. Indeed, numerous staff members doubted whether they themselves would ever get a chance to see the finished Report, especially if it contained some comments critical of IDRC policies and operational practices. People from all levels of the Centre urged us to speak frankly in the Report and not to pull our punches.

The Report records many of the beliefs that people in and out of the Centre hold. While it is admitted that many of these may be contradicted by the facts, the authors feel that often what people perceive to be true may be just as important as what is true.

As one of the senior members of the Centre put it in his own inimitable style: "When I finish reading the Report, I want to be so angry that I want to kick your tail. But, when I cool down, I will have to acknowledge that what you have given me is true."

Although it would be impossible to keep out some of the personal bias of the authors, the Report is essentially a distillation of what we were told by the people we interviewed.

In places we will appear critical of Africa and Africans but such a tone is almost inevitable in a response to terms of reference which, while asking for an honest assessment of Africa's capability is generally inferior to that of other continents. African research institutions suffer from management problems which are continent-wide. Political instability in many countries may quickly wipe out years of steady advancement in building up research capability and institutions. As well, many researchers work in an environment in which they have to face serious administrative and other problems.

Considerable concern was expressed over the capability of many African governments and institutions to receive and disburse funds, and to deal with other project logistical matters effectively, especially purchasing. There have been consequent suggestions that more grant funds should be Centre administered, that the Centre should be more involved in direct project administration and that the Centre should undertake more purchasing of equipment and materials for projects. Some people wondered if we should not again try and insist on bank accounts separate from government exchequer or institutional accounts.

But Africa is there and it needs assistance badly. The Centre was created to provide assistance in a designated field and such assistance can only be appropriately conceived and put to best use if a donor knows what the real needs, capabilities and circumstances of the recipient researcher, institution and country are, flaws and all, and can act according to its knowledge. Aid which is given to a recipient which is idealized into something the donor might wish to think it is but isn't, is not likely to be effective.

The Report will also at times be critical of the Centre. However we suppose that such comment on the Centre, or at least on its policies and practices in Africa, is also inherent in dealing with the terms of reference for this Report. As donor agencies go - in concept, staffing, sensitivity and efficiency - the Centre is recognized as one of the best of the breed. Nevertheless, the staff clearly feel that with what they know and the latitude the incorporating Act gives them to put it into practice, it could be better. Also, like any organization, without vigilance the Centre can hang on to its deadwood, lose its imaginative, experienced and energetic people, become stifled in its paperwork and procedures, lose sight of its international purpose, and generally drift backwards and downwards.

There is an ill defined feeling among many Africans and staff that the IDRC is having a mild crisis of spirit. There is a sense that Centre staff have become too conservative and are afraid to take risks - that not enough risk projects are coming forward and staff are hiding behind the Board of Governors, the Executive and the Division Directors to explain why this is so.

Most of those interviewed felt it was a good time for the IDRC, ten years from its birth, and in a changing world internationally and domestically, to be taking a fresh look at its policies, structures and operational practices. Considerable support was expressed by Centre staff for the planning exercises currently underway (of which this study is one) although the warning was raised that the IDRC should not move too far in this direction and spend too much time and money on evaluations as some other donor agencies do. A planning document, according to many interviewees, is useful but it should not become a straight-jacket. The consensus is that a great deal of IDRC's success is due to its flexibility. The hope is that this policy study might help to lessen existing constraints rather than move to establish standardized (albeit different) policies and operational mechanisms for IDRC projects in Africa which might limit this flexibility.

Some staff have warned that the Centre should not become too self-congratulatory about its public corporation status, its International Board of Governors, its independence from the civil service bureaucracy, and its generally favourable image with the Canadian public. They argue that on these issues the overseas governments and the recipients are likely to be indifferent.

Overseas, the IDRC is appreciated for sending people to discuss project matters who are generally familiar both with the disciplinary field in question and with the geographical region. The Centre is also appreciated for answering mail promptly, for rapidly processing grant requests, for saying "yes" or "no" with dispatch, for sending funds and equipment expeditiously - in short - for generally behaving in a businesslike fashion. However inexperienced or unbusinesslike some African institutions may be, one should not think that African researchers and administrators do not appreciate, respect, expect and, yes, even demand efficient business practices from organizations such as the IDRC.

The Centre has a good record in most of these areas although it should be of concern that the greatest complaint we received from African researchers was that they did not get enough critical comments from IDRC staff. They complained that they did not see the staff enough and often felt that their technical reports were not being read. Their analysis of the situation was not refuted in our discussions with many of the Centre program staff.

Program staff feel that there is a lack of appreciation among senior staff in Ottawa as to the particular difficulties of working in Africa (problems of travel, unfamiliar cultural values, political instability, communication, administrative support and management, etc.). They feel their productivity is being unfairly evaluated in the African setting by people who do not sense how much harder it is to work there than in Southeast Asia. Some project staff feel frustrated at the superficiality of much of their professional involvement with projects, and most feel overworked generally; Africans and other agency people strongly agreed that this could be so. Yet some Centre administrative staff disagree, question the declining commitment of some staff members, and feel that some program staff are not being utilized as effectively as they might be.

Many of the staff spoke of the poor quality of many projects in Africa. How is the term "quality" being used here? Some of the project summaries appear to be high-quality blueprints for the projects while the quality of the application of the blueprints and the results for the same projects may be low. If people become more concerned with the quality of the blueprints rather than the effectiveness of the execution of the plans, then the Centre is in difficulty.

It is understandable, although still highly undesirable, for Ottawa administrators and most Board members, who are two stages removed from the reality, to lose sight of this. It is even more damaging when their attitudes on this matter begin to influence the actions of the program officers as well.

Although the time spent on preparing some project summaries seems excessive, setting high standards for the planning of a project is not ill-considered. When such plans come to the Projects Committee or the Board, hopefully there should be some clear, frank discussion on what support will have to be built in to increase the chances of the plans being applied reasonably well given what is acknowledged, or should be, about the difficulties of working in Africa. Here the

program officer might declare that, to hope to achieve what is in the plan, considerable back-up support will be needed involving a substantial amount of the program officer's time. In a debate following this type of request, Management and the Board might be left with a clearer concept of how the time of program staff fits into the success of a project. We have been told that people often push out of their mind the realities of the field conditions in which research will be carried out in Africa and just hope that the plans will be followed; or they compromise in their own minds that it is not worth the hassle to fight for the cost of the necessary support and condition themselves to be content with poor research results and the excuse that some good research training was accomplished.

From IDRC's point of view this does not mean larger amounts of money for projects but more money for project support including the time of program staff.

The suggestion has been made that in many cases smaller projects may be more amenable to success. On the other hand, the IDRC also has the clear challenge to be capable and ready so that, in some particular problem areas, its resources can be marshalled to do something significant. The need is there, the difficulties are great and many staff want to try it, but the present Division structure does not easily accommodate a problem-oriented approach.

Many people feel that the IDRC's short project periods, for a Continent where it is often difficult to accomplish anything in the first year, are quite unrealistic and that longer term commitment, and the present occasional practice of extending support through successive phases, are not the same thing at all. An idea is presented on how to set up longer term support programs while limiting financial and legal exposure in the event of the failure of either party to respect its undertakings.

In a very general way it seems that, while most other agencies recruited subject generalists but geographic specialists, the Centre started out the other way around and recruited subject specialists and geographic generalists. It now appears that, at least with respect to Africa, there is a need for people who are specialists in both a relevant discipline and in Africa or a part of it.

The Report addresses the issue of Centre representation overseas. Concern was expressed that Regional Directors make little or no

contribution to program and project development and management and that their role should be seen as more managerial than diplomatic. Some felt that more and smaller offices would meet better the challenge of the size and diversity of Africa while being more administratively manageable. The opinion of some staff is recorded that the posting of program staff to Regional Offices has not always been well thought out and some guidelines for future postings are suggested in the Report. Some reactions to the closing of the Nairobi Office are summarized.

A number of people interviewed advocated, in the interest of increasing overall project effectiveness, limiting the countries and the program areas in which the Centre should work.

There seemed to be a consensus that, adhering rigorously to present project criteria, it would be difficult to have many projects in Africa. Most Divisions, nevertheless, often taking rather generous licence with these criteria, have managed to spend what might be termed an equitable portion of their budgets in Africa. Figures are provided on how much research support has in fact been provided in Africa in the past ten years, and to whom, and they suggest that it is more than many people in the Centre would have believed. The distribution of support is rather widespread which supports the generally held view that the Centre does not need, and is better off without, specific continent, region or country allocations.

There is a feeling among the staff that the IDRC Board is anxious to have more projects in Africa and more projects in the least developed countries in Africa, while at the same time it would like to keep the use of expatriates in projects at a minimum and to cut administrative costs. (While the IDRC may have reservations about providing technical assistance it is suggested that, under certain conditions, the Africans generally do not). From all people interviewed, there is a clear consensus that these goals are contradictory and cannot be met. Numerous people suggested that it should be made clear to the Board what the implications of these conflicting goals are and if they still stand by these policies then they should be asked to explain to the staff how these goals can be reached.

It was clear in talking to Centre staff that no one felt that a shortage of project money per se was hampering their ability to develop a good program in Africa. More than money, the quality of projects is dependent upon the calibre of leadership and the

quality of other specific inputs such as management support, financial disbursement arrangements and information resources. One clear implication of the suggestions we received for improving the Centre's work in Africa is that they would involve increased program support costs. Without additional program staff and/or more involvement of technical assistance the staff feel they will not be able to improve or expand their African programs and in particular would not be able to open up new projects in the least developed African countries where project development and monitoring costs will be especially high.

Several firmly held beliefs of donor agencies are examined. The idea that an agency like the IDRC provides seed money to launch a new idea or endeavour and that, when the project ends after a few years, country resources continue it on, shows a misappreciation of both the amounts of money generally available in very poor countries and the flexibility of their administrations to adapt to new opportunities.

While donor agencies like to feel that they only provide some inputs into projects, projects which in every important respect are desired and managed by the recipients, the Report suggests that creating this sense of proprietorship, and of the responsibility which goes with it, is a more difficult and complex challenge than might superficially appear to be the case.

The training issue is examined at some length, both from the point of view of whether it is more important to obtain good scientific results from a project or if one may be satisfied with a training benefit, and of what kind of training the Centre should provide. The Centre expectation that people are trained in the context of a project, whether at home or abroad, in order that they shall return and apply their new knowledge to the project or at least to the general field, has, the record suggests, met many disappointments.

Insofar as the formation and operation of "networks" are concerned, the Report suggests that current conditions in Africa do not militate in favour of the concept of these cooperative arrangements which seem to have worked so well in Asia. Other cooperative arrangements, perhaps more suited to continental circumstances, are examined.

A section is devoted to the pros and cons of the salary "topping up" issue. While not making a specific recommendation, the Report does emphasize the diversity of remuneration systems in different countries and strongly urges that close attention be paid to the recommendation of program staff familiar with the country where a particular case is being considered.

There is the overriding theme regarding "the demand for research" in Africa. The whole supposition that there is a set of national research priorities in each African country which are taken seriously, would not hold up to much scrutiny. This makes it difficult of follow a completely responsive policy.

Is it a gross over-generalization to say that the Centre is waffling along a spectrum which at one end says

- the Centre will be responsive to proposals, will judge them on the basis of paper submissions, will fund the ones which look best and will then leave them alone except for periodic progress and financial reports,
- while at the other end stands the original mandate which was to join with African researchers and, by involving oneself in both an administrative and intellectual manner, help them to do a better job of running their own research and developing their capabilities?

If the first model is what is wanted, of course the Centre could drastically reduce the number of staff, send out brochures about what it offers and wait in Ottawa for the applications to come in. Consultants could be hired from time to time to evaluate the results or to develop new programs.

If that were to take place, those who know the game of grantsmanship would continue to get their money. But what would happen to the weaker institutions and weaker researchers? What would happen to the IDRC vision? It is said "Without Vision The People Perish!"

II

INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale And Terms Of Reference

Some Centre staff have argued that conditions for supporting research in Africa are somewhat different than those found in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. While noting that there are substantial differences in the overall level of development between different African nations, the suggestion is that almost all of these countries share the common problem of a weakly developed scientific infrastructure.

Because of these conditions, the argument continues, IDRC policies and practices may not be as appropriate for most African countries as they are for much of the rest of the developing world. The suggestion has been made that these inappropriate policies and practices have made it difficult to mount many Centre projects in some African countries (most especially Francophone countries and the least developed countries) and have hindered the effectiveness of most of the projects which have been supported.

This Report attempts to analyze the realities of operating research projects in Africa and could perhaps serve as a starting point for a similar review for countries with limited scientific infrastructures in other parts of the world.

In preparing this Report the writers primarily pulled together the experiences and opinions of selected Centre staff present and past and a range of other people involved in Centre projects in Africa or with international development generally. Through discussions with the above people, the consultants were to determine whether any changes in IDRC's policies and practices should be introduced to better achieve the Centre's objective of strengthening indigenous scientific capability in Africa. (See Appendix A for the specific terms of reference).

2. Approach To Preparing The Report

- (a) In the summer of 1979, the Office of the Vice-President, Planning, prepared a first draft statement on the reason for undertaking a planning exercise related to Centre policies in the least developed countries. Numerous trip reports and program notes were selected from the files as useful background reading on the subject

11.../

After discussion between the staff of OVPP and the two consultants, it was determined that it was more appropriate to limit this study to Africa, at least for the time being.

- (b) On September 7, the OVPP informed all Centre Officers by memo that the study was underway and that Tony Price and Don Simpson had been engaged to carry out the work.
- (c) Don Simpson began his work in September by meeting with a small number of Ottawa based staff from three Program Divisions to seek their support in suggesting ways in which the interviews might be structured and issues that should be covered.
- (d) Tony Price began by drawing up a preliminary statement outlining his view of the situation based on his eleven years in Africa - seven of which were spent serving as the Director of an IDRC Regional Office, first in Dakar and then in Nairobi.
- (e) From the initial interviews and a statement prepared by Tony Price, Simpson and Price developed lists of questions (one for IDRC staff and one for non-IDRC staff) to be used as a guide for the interviews.
- (f) Don Simpson undertook to interview present and former Centre staff who had experience in Africa. Interviews were also held with African researchers, directors of projects supported by IDRC funds, recipients of IDRC training awards, government, university and national science council officials and representatives of other donor agencies. To accomplish this he visited the Centre in Ottawa many times and spent three weeks travelling in Egypt, Kenya and Senegal.

Interviewees were told that although their ideas would be used in the Report their names would not. Several brief excerpts from written reports by staff have been used but they have neither been footnoted nor the authors identified.

- (g) Tony Price undertook an African trip on other IDRC business and interviewed African researchers in Tanzania, Mali and the Sudan. Some of these interviews were useful for this Report as well.

(See Appendix B for a complete list of those interviewed).

- (h) During the period in which the interviews were being done, Don Simpson gave two oral interim reports to the President of the IDRC and informed people in each division of the findings that were coming out of his work. Some people met with Don Simpson more than once, reacting to interim reports and suggesting additional readings or other individuals who should be interviewed.
- (i) The period of late January and early February was spent writing the Report. Don Simpson wrote the draft based on what had come out of his interviews. Later, the original statement written by Tony Price was utilized to articulate or elaborate on issues raised by the interviewees.

Many people might say that it is presumptuous to try to speak of IDRC activities on the continent of Africa. The authors of this Report recognize that the continent is diverse and the work of the IDRC is varied. We acknowledge the difficulty of making generalized statements which apply to all countries or to all divisions of the Centre. Although a visit was made to Egypt and interviews were held with people experienced in the Sudan, the bulk of the discussion focussed on sub-Saharan Africa. No attempt was made to explore the situation in the Maghreb. We realize that for many of our statements there will be exceptions either in certain countries or in certain program areas.

Nonetheless, we feel that some generalizations are valid and can be helpful in assisting the Board to grapple with the reality of supporting research in Africa. Essentially the Report is a distillation of what we were told by those whom we have interviewed. We have avoided issues which were raised by only one or two individuals and instead have focussed on items which were seen as important by numerous people from different countries and from different research disciplines. In cases where substantial numbers of people spoke on an issue but held differing views, these conflicting views are noted. In some cases

we may well have included points of view which some people on the Board or in Centre Management might say do not accurately reflect the true position. We have included them on the assumption that what people in the field perceive to be true may at times be every bit as important as what is true.

In raising questions about Centre policies and practices in Africa it has been impossible to divorce how the IDRC functions in Africa from what the IDRC is itself. Thus more comments about overall IDRC structure and performance appear in this Report than we had originally expected.

III

PRESENT CENTRE PROJECT SUPPORT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

1. Mandate

Under its Act of Incorporation the principal mandate of the Centre is:

To initiate, encourage, support and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical, and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions, and, in carrying out those objects

- (a) to enlist the talents of natural and social scientists and technologists of Canada and other countries;
- (b) to assist the developing regions to build up the research capabilities, the innovative skills and the institutions required to solve their problems;
- (c) to encourage generally the coordination of international development research; and
- (d) to foster cooperation in research on development problems between the developed and developing regions for their mutual benefit.

2. Project Criteria

In IDRC's descriptive brochure it states that, in considering a project, professional staff will ask themselves the following questions:

- (i) Does the proposal fit into a priority expressed by a government or research institute in a developing country?
- (ii) Are the research findings likely to have useful application over a region and in countries beyond the one in which research takes place?

- (iii) Will the research help close gaps in living standards in those countries and lessen the imbalance in development between rural and urban areas?
- (iv) Will it make the fullest possible use of local resources and research workers from the region?
- (v) Will it result in better trained and more experienced researchers, and more effective research institutions?
- (vi) Does it fall within the IDRC's areas of concentration ?

3. General Operating Principles And Practices

From the beginning the Centre decided to give most of its financial support to developing country researchers rather than to expatriates from developed countries. Within a developing country there was a concern to take a risk with more junior or trained, but as yet unproven, scientists rather than supporting only scientists who already enjoyed international reputations.

The general rule has been that the IDRC gives little support for capital goods or technical assistance and then only in the context and framework of a research project. The expectation is that the research project will be administered by a developing country institution and the research will be carried out by local researchers with no "topping up" of their regular salaries. The rationale for this is that the IDRC is only providing some support for an activity which, independently, the recipient country decided was useful and which it wanted to do. The length of time for a project is usually seen as two to three years with the possibility of additional phases when warranted. The disbursing of money in the developing country is usually done through the government exchequer account.

No specific sums of money are allocated on a country, regional or even continental basis. Instead, projects are developed by program officers who have a world-wide disciplinary, rather than a country or regional purview although they may be assisted by liaison officers working out of a regional office. Regional directors and their core administrative staff have no effective program responsibilities.

Associate directors and program officers in each division have no individual authority to approve projects or allocate money. Decisions on project funding are made by the Board of Governors after initial screening by a Projects Committee made up of Division Directors, Ottawa-based administrative officers and some outside representatives, although, up to fixed limits, the President and Division Directors can approve small projects.

The Treasurer's Office, in Ottawa, controls the disbursement of funds although gradual decentralization of some of these activities to some Regional Offices is now taking place.

With the exception of some scholarships offered through the Human Resources Program, most training is supported within the context of individual projects.

One program officer, stating the ideal, said that when the IDRC agrees to support a project the hope is that national policy makers have expressed their support for the project, it could be useful and policy relevant in a number of countries, trained and capable researchers have been identified, the capacity of the recipient institutions to receive and administer funds has been ascertained, facilities for data gathering and analysis have been found to be adequate and opportunities for publishing and disseminating the research product have been verified.

One does not expect to fulfil all of the ideal requirements completely with every project and indeed many Centre projects in all continents would fall short in some respect. The consensus of staff is, however, that usually it is easier to fulfil these requirements in most Asian, Latin American or Caribbean countries than in most of Africa.

IV

THE CASE FOR OPERATING DIFFERENTLY IN AFRICA

1. Should The IDRC Have Policies And Practices In Africa Different From Those In The Rest Of The World?

Some people in the IDRC make the argument that Africa deserves special attention because it is an area which is suffering from major problems such as rapid urban growth, rising incidence of disease and great famines. The point is also made that a great number of the least developed countries are in Africa.

Other people disagree, saying that the argument for extra special needs in Africa is not so powerful when you compare it with the reality of Asia. Their position is that indeed many of the least developed countries are in Africa but their populations are not large. We were told for example that although Africans most certainly are faced with serious water problems, only 9% of the people in the world who are without adequate water supply are in Africa. Staff members with this perspective would say that perhaps the African continent is of particular political interest at this moment but these political interests should not overly influence the Centre's research priorities. While it is pertinent and useful to examine the appropriateness of its policies in Africa, they urge the Centre not to make an a priori judgment that the African continent is of special importance to it.

We feel it is important to keep in mind that the IDRC was not created to solve all the development problems in the world nor to give the most money to the most deprived, but rather to build research capacity and support researchers who are working on development problems. It is perhaps with regard to research capacity, and not necessarily other aspects of development, that Africa is poorest. For example India produces a large percentage of the world's scientists yet its development effort remains burdened by circumstances much more daunting than those faced by many African countries. One would have thought that Centre staff arguing for more, and more appropriate, activity in Africa would have done it on the basis of the needs of the research community. However, many made their point on the basis of the overall development picture of the respective regions.

A majority of Africans and other agency people spoke in favour of different IDRC policies for Africa. IDRC staff, on the other hand, were split on this issue. Some indeed felt present policies were limiting their ability to submit good projects to the Board while others were interpreting existing policies in such a flexible manner that they were managing to deal successfully with some of the factors which make it particularly difficult to support research in Africa. Some staff indicated that they were subjecting African projects to less rigorous scrutiny than projects from other parts of the world. Clearly different divisions are interpreting the policies more or less rigidly which led one senior staff person to say: "We do not have one IDRC, we have four IDRC's".

We found close to a consensus, however, on what would happen if the staff rigorously applied current criteria and coupled this with strict adherence to other Centre practices. The sense was that the Centre would have few projects there, those few would be concentrated in a handful of countries and the quality of most projects would be poor. Indeed, it was surprising to find that many staff felt that the quality of present projects in Africa is low. Indeed numerous staff were more concerned with improving the quality of the projects in Africa than in increasing the number. They felt there was often a considerable gap between what the project appeared to be on the project summary presented to the Board and what it is in reality.

A discussion of the key African issues led into questions about overall IDRC structure, goals and policies. This prompted one senior staff member to say that he did not particularly want new IDRC policies for Africa. He did feel however, that the IDRC as an organization needs some new policies and he felt it would be more difficult to continue in Africa with the old policies than it would be in Asia or Latin America.

2. To What Extent Is The IDRC's Difficulty In Identifying Effective Research Projects Caused By A Shortage Of Research Institutions And Researchers?

In the following sub-section, we deal with a number of general conditions prevailing in Africa which affect the Centre's

performance there. Here we wish to examine the quantity and quality of research institutions and researchers. Everyone with whom we talked, at some point or other, did raise the issue of the shortage and quality of research institutions and researchers. Arising from their comments is the fundamental question of whether or not the shortage in some countries is too great for an IDRC style of operation to function successfully.

This question relates directly to the IDRC's fourth project criteria "Will the proposal make fullest use of local resources and research workers from the region?". While this criteria does not quite say it, the practice as we have already indicated has generally been to accept a project only where there are local people to carry it out and basic infrastructure and material resources already in place. We accept the wisdom of the aphorism which says that recipients are more committed to an endeavour when they actually contribute to it something which is theirs. It is just that, in some of the poorer countries of Africa, and in areas which both they and the IDRC think are important, there just are no people or facilities. What then should the Centre do?

Early on in the life of the Centre senior management identified three categories of developing nations.

- (i) Those nations where the number of scientists is really very small and the institutional capability limited - (most of the nations in Africa, Nepal and Papua New Guinea). The most important need here it was deemed was to build the primary institutions of education and training to assure a future generation of research scientists.
- (ii) Those nations where there is a substantial number of scientists and where there exists the minimal tools and institutions for research but where the research budgets are limited.
- (iii) Those nations where the institutional infrastructure is relatively elaborate, the number of scientists large, and the need for assistance is primarily to deepen and extend what already exists - India and Brazil for example.

Evidence indicates that the general decision in those early years was that the bulk of the IDRC's resources were to go to the second and third groups. As most African countries were and still are in category (i), the suggestion is that it will continue to be difficult to identify and sustain IDRC style activities in much of Africa. One clear example of the shortage of institutions in Africa is the fact that at the time when most countries were receiving their independence there was not one faculty of agriculture in Francophone Africa. Progress from that extreme position has been slow. There is still not a faculty of forestry in Francophone Africa. The one School of Library Science in Black Francophone Africa was not built until the sixties. An additional depressing note is that in some African countries where good institutions do exist, the research record is now declining due to a host of factors (management problems, reluctance to do any research without extra remuneration, etc.) and they are now for the most part not attractive centres for IDRC support.

While there are some indications of an increasing interest in some countries in developing more research institutions, too often the efforts are not maximized because of unfavourable general country conditions referred to throughout this Report. But any lack of institutions per se is probably not nearly as prejudicial as shortcomings in the institutions themselves, including:

- their geographical distribution;
- the appropriateness of their scientific focus in the light of present day priority fields;
- their staffing;
- the shortage of operating funds, and
- their management problems.

Moreover other problems such as patronage and political tensions often further handicap the capability of institutions to carry out serious, useful and sustained research.

A considerable number of research institutions in Africa date from the colonial era at a time when their location and the problems they were given to solve were best suited to the special interests of the colonial power in that region, i.e. in fields related to activities which provided a livelihood to White settlers or which concerned the business of corporations of the colonial power. A station might have been set up to serve a huge area then all under the same flag. Now this area may be several countries, countries possibly quite out of step with each other politically and which may not even speak to each other. For example most old research stations in what was once British East Africa may be found in Kenya, where most of the White settler population lived, rather than in neighbouring Tanzania and Uganda.

At independence there were practically no African researchers working at home and in the post independence years their training understandably received a low priority. For those few who managed to receive a training, conditions of work, and especially of advancement and remuneration, in research institutions were so inferior to what they could obtain elsewhere with their educational qualifications that they usually soon drifted off to other occupations in government administrative positions or work with international aid agencies. Those who stuck it out as a rule have too much on their plate and, called upon to work both on national and externally financed programs, they often grow to resent the latter as meaning extra work, on somebody else's project, and for no supplementary benefit.

In many developing countries, there is not anything resembling an established career structure for researchers once they are trained. One also notices an unevenness in their ability and fields of expertise. In a given field there may be an excellent person or persons or there may be only a mediocre person or persons or even in an important activity there may be nobody at all. This reflects haphazard training policies together with all the other factors mentioned in this Report which make research unattractive and unrewarding. Where you do have a top person he/she usually couples her or his scientific ability with a strong commitment to the country's development.

In some cases countries have taken the position that it is easier to let outside aid agencies supply foreign researchers than it is to build up their own institutions. This makes it difficult to encourage research projects which would be undertaken by local researchers. The IDRC, on the other hand, has sought out places where there is an interest in self-management of projects but giving added responsibility without offering additional rewards has created difficulties in some parts of Africa. As well the researchers often do not want to go to the field to do projects where the IDRC wants them.

The long-term goal as seen by many researchers and international aid agency personnel is to help develop a research environment in which local scholars can clearly articulate and maintain high standards of research and scholarly activity without external aid. In most disciplines this is not likely to happen for some years.

For example we were told that the number of social scientists in Africa is not large and in any one country it may well be less than is needed to provide the kind of reference group, intellectual stimulation and competition necessary. Perhaps in East Africa only Kenya and Tanzania approach that stage. Some countries were attaining it then lost it through the exodus of their scholars for political reasons. In most places there are just not enough people to form a self-sustaining scientific research community.

In the field of medical research the World Health Organization has recently been allocating millions of dollars for research efforts in tropical areas, a majority of which are allocated for use in Africa. They face a constant problem of finding local manpower to utilize this money. Indeed they often find difficulty in locating research personnel whether expatriate or local.

It should also be noted that AFNS, which has spent a good portion of its money in Africa, now feels it may have exhausted the existing cadres of researchers working in some of the fields where it has been offering support. They may well be faced with the prospect of putting in more expatriates, limiting the number of projects, seeking new disciplinary areas or funding

projects through international research centres. If they continue to cut back on their grants to these centres, (as CIDA increases its contribution) they could face an increasingly difficult task in finding researchers with the time to present and carry out new projects.

3. What Are Other Difficulties Of Functioning In Africa?

(a) Management

Where one finds a research institution in the right place and working on current priority problems, reasonably staffed and with funds available, there are invariably other serious handicaps, many of which revolve around the problems of management.

Bureaucracy, usually patterned on a model inherited from (and long abandoned by) the colonial power, and to which some administrators have taken with uncommon vigour, often stifles constructive effort and enthusiasm. Most directors seem to spend most of their time scrambling for funds, enmeshed in tender Board procedures and generally wrestling with paper and officialdom. As capable as they might be, they are dependent on other individuals who and services which, may be less capable. (As Stanley Meisler wrote, not long ago, in Atlantic Monthly: "African education is producing a host of managers who sit in their government offices and meet every problem with their store of memories. If the problem is new, if memory fails to cope with it, the educated men shuffle it and then tuck it under the bottom of the mounting stack of papers on the desk").

And then there is travel, which may at first seem a picayune subject to raise in a Report such as this but which many people think an important impediment to solid work in Africa. Any African researcher of any standing at most times has before him a seductive array of invitations from donor agencies to attend international gatherings of one kind or another. Too often attending these meetings, however irrelevant the topic may be to the person's particular field of work or less important than a job to be done at home, takes priority. We fully

appreciate the value of the exchange of scientific information and of seeing what is going on elsewhere and in meeting one's professional colleagues, and it is only human to agree that a trip to Paris can be a very fitting reward for slugging it out six months in Bobo-Dioulasso, but there does seem to be a considerable abuse of international travel for which the donor agencies must hold themselves partly responsible.

Management leadership is even more important in Africa than in developed countries. With trained people in short supply, an outstanding individual can have an extraordinarily positive impact and cause the activity for which he/she is responsible to perform significantly above what might be considered the national average.

(b) Lack Of Funds

There is still relatively little research interest in most African countries. Some would say that what research there is, is more the result of outside agencies proposing it than indigenous agencies asking for it. In recent years the official attitude in many countries has moved from tolerance to interest and in some cases beyond this to positive recognition of the utility of research. Yet the research culture remains fragile. Many countries still see evaluation and research as low priority. They are treated as luxuries and deferred in favour of applying resources to the maintenance of the system. Indeed some Centre staff feel that, in the least developed countries, if we push research it may divert scarce resources from traditional delivery services which meet more important, at least more pressing, needs. This would be putting the cart before the horse. Money for research from within the country budgets, therefore, is not easily found. Any new institution, even one with proven capability, may wait many years before its successful programs begin to get secure funding in the government budget. This calls into doubt the IDRC's concept of supplying seed money. The Centre's stated expectation is that when it helps a new research program to become established, when it withdraws its support local funding will take over. Often this is not the case.

One of the authors, evaluating funding of remote sensing activities in Africa, reported as follows:

It (remote sensing) is new technology, transferred from outside, and in the medium term, to survive, it must continue to be funded from outside. Its importance is recognized at the professional and even policy-making level but this recognition has not yet managed to attract funding from indigenous resources. So the IDRC hope and theory that it provides seed money to get something started and that, once started and the usefulness established, national resources carry it on, is certainly precocious here and probably generally where new technology is introduced by outside donor agencies.

Our hope and theory are undoubtedly based upon an assumption that, as countries develop, they have more human and material resources upon which to draw to carry on endeavours started by outsiders. Unfortunately, in most LDC's these resources do not seem to be developing fast enough even to look after expanding needs in traditional sectors, let alone permit taking on new ones. The poorest countries literally lurch from project to project, for both priority and secondary "needs".

(c) Handling Of Funds And Purchases And Use Of Material And Equipment.

Most countries have just one government exchequer account in which, and from which, all public funds are deposited and disbursed, theoretically in accordance with the "Estimates" of Revenue and Expenditure.

One author was presented with an agonizingly long list of examples of the frustrations faced by researchers as a result of local bureaucratic problems in the handling of funds and the procurement of equipment and supplies.

One project leader said she had lost seven months out of a twenty-month project because of local bureaucratic constraints. The administrators told her they saw it

as extra work for which they were not being paid so they did not give it a high priority. They told her just to relax and take her pay and not worry that nothing was being accomplished.

Another researcher in February ordered small office supplies for a project. Although the cost of these supplies was covered in the budget, it was the following June before he was told by the finance officer (who had no knowledge of or connection with the research and perhaps little interest either) that these purchases were not of high enough priority to be dealt with more expeditiously.

In research being done at a university the money will usually go into a general university account. The university finance officer, facing the inevitable cash flow problems, may then use the IDRC money for other activities and thereby hold up the research. University authorities in some countries claimed this was never a problem but the stories from the individual researchers in the same universities were quite the contrary. To be fair to the universities we were told that many of them demand tougher accounting on projects than aid agencies do to ensure that they are not accused of corruption. The net result of this, however, is to add more bureaucratic procedures which impede the progress of projects.

The purchase of material and equipment, including vehicles, frequently causes problems. Having to go through numerous tender boards, which are unfamiliar with the needs of the researcher, not only slows progress but may result in inappropriate acquisitions. It may take over a year to purchase a vehicle (during which time the price has risen steadily). In some cases second hand vehicles are available but government regulations prohibit the institutions from buying them. In many projects, after long delays, the researcher has prevailed upon the IDRC to purchase the vehicle. When the Centre is faced, as it often is, with the choice of ordering something overseas and perhaps waiting over a year for delivery, or purchasing it locally from stock at perhaps 25% more, it should take a hard look

at overall economy and the best interests of the project technically, and the views of program officers should be given a lot of weight in the final decision. Where is the sense (and economy) of having a \$4,000 a month advisor confined to barracks six months because the Centre won't pay that sum to take delivery of a vehicle from local stock to allow him to get going immediately?

If we may continue with the vehicle example, having purchased it, it is sometimes difficult to assure its availability for the project. In institutions where there is a shortage of everything, it is understandable that there will be pressure from other parts of the institution to use the vehicle. The question is often whether or not even the main use is for the project. Some institutions funded by other agencies purchase vehicles and register them with private plates. They feel if they had government plates they would be lucky to have the use of them half the time. Other project leaders have demanded the right to purchase petrol with their own money and then to seek reimbursement from the IDRC. One claimed that if he had to deal with the government system to get petrol, the vehicle would sit idle many days when it was needed.

In some countries the institutions require an invoice for items purchased and the invoice is paid only after the item is delivered. Because of unstable financial situations, which often result in very slow pay practices, suppliers will not deal with these institutions except on a cash basis. Given inflation and interest rates, these suppliers could not stay in business otherwise. Of course many institutions find it almost impossible to meet commercial terms while respecting government regulations. The result is usually crippling delays, frustration and perhaps no material or equipment.

Once hard currency is converted into local currency, as invariably happens upon reception, it is extremely difficult to re-convert it back to its original state, even to purchase items provided in project budgets and agreements.

Again, in the case of purchases being made outside the country, one should not minimize the difficulties of evaluating and selecting appropriate suppliers, obtaining prices, and arranging payment and delivery.

(d) Maintenance

Buildings and equipment, whether inherited from the predecessor colony or subsequently acquired, so often are allowed to deteriorate. This reflects again the low budgetary priority accorded research, the consequent lack of adequate funds and the shortage of replacement parts, but even more a disinclination by many institutions to take care of things. This problem of maintenance can often disrupt the progress of research projects. Arrangements for handling maintenance and parts replacement problems may have to be built into some Centre-supported projects.

(e) Communications

Telephone and telecommunication services are notoriously unreliable. It may take years to obtain a telephone and, once installed, its unreliability may make it more decorative than functional. In many cases one has to function as if telephones do not exist. Cables may take weeks to deliver and mail service may be equally frustrating. Political instability in some areas has made it impossible to correspond with project directors for months at a time. Thus it is difficult to make appointments in advance. This creates particular problems in arranging meetings and seminars and establishing networks. Because of these communication difficulties the regional offices cannot always help as much as Ottawa would like. For example, the Dakar office cannot contact Zaire any easier than Ottawa can.

Travel is difficult to and in Africa. There are time changes. Airplane flights are limited which makes it difficult to get in and out of a place in a few days. Often there are long delays and cancellations. One may have to waste days waiting for flights. East African

travel has been particularly hindered by the closing of the Kenyan-Tanzanian border. Hotels do not always respect reservations especially when one's flight arrives late. Roads are rough and dangerous, and during rainy seasons often impassable. It is not always easy to rent a vehicle on short notice. In many countries petrol is now rationed, in very short supply or, in some localities, simply unobtainable.

Obtaining of visas also adds to the difficulties. One staff person worked four months to obtain clearance to monitor a project in Malawi. Some countries insist that the IDRC staff person have a letter of invitation from the institution he/she wishes to visit. This limits one's flexibility in making travel arrangements. To obtain a visa for the Congo one has to stop-over in Paris for 48 hours.

(f) Political Considerations

Political instability in certain African countries is a factor with which one must contend. It has led to a destruction of the embryonic research tradition in some countries. Even in countries which have not been torn apart by revolution and coup d'Etat, political tensions and animosities have hampered progress. For example strained relations between Kenya and Tanzania, countries quite out of step politically, led to their border being closed three years ago and to the break-up of the East African Community which owned and administered probably the most comprehensive and finest research establishment in Africa.

4. Has The IDRC Allocated A Reasonable Proportion Of Its Budget To African Projects?

The conventional wisdom among many IDRC people (mainly outside of the AFNS Division) is that the African continent has been badly neglected by the IDRC. A perusal of the record brings this assumption into question.

<u>* All Centre Projects</u>			<u>Projects In Africa</u>	
<u>No. of Projects</u>		<u>Total Grants</u>	<u>No. of Projects</u>	<u>Total Grants</u>
1970/76	340	\$64,823,199	73	\$12,855,871
1976/80	<u>446</u>	<u>79,049,268</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>18,378,779</u>
TOTAL:	786	\$143,872,467	191	\$31,234,650

Clearly the AFNS Division has made substantial grants to projects in Africa. According to the Division's own records, since 1971 28% of its dollar appropriations have been in Africa and 29% of its total number of projects were on the African continent. The PINS printout indicates that those percentages have increased slightly for the 1976-80 period over the 1970-76 period. Given the population of the continent and the low level of research capability in many of the African countries, support to Africa has been quite high in terms of the total AFNS program. Other Divisions have not allocated as high a percentage of their budget to Africa. Social Sciences Division for example in the 1976-80 period has allocated 17% of its projects and only 7% of its budget to Africa. For Health Sciences the figures are 11% of the projects and 12% of the grants. The Information Sciences Division which is viewed by many Centre staff, including management personnel, as having little involvement in Africa has allocated 20% of its projects and 18% of its budget in this same 76-80 period. In fact, in the earlier period Information Sciences had allocated 24% of its budget in Africa (See Appendix C for a breakdown of number and value of projects of each Division in Africa).

It is true that AFNS has been able to use some of the International Agricultural Research Centres in Africa as recipients for sizeable grants. Nonetheless the Centre's record regarding total allocations to Africa is much more substantial than many people in the Centre seem to realize.

* This data and most other figures on IDRC projects used in this Report were obtained from PINS. The 1980 statistics include all projects approved up to 1 December 1979).

5. Are There Many Countries In Africa In Which The IDRC Has Few, Or No, Projects?

(See Appendix D for a list of the number and value of projects by country).

The overall picture of the IDRC's involvement in Africa by number and value of projects, broken down into regions serviced by the three Regional Offices, is:

WARO	-	87 projects	Worth	\$15,793,445
EARO	-	63 projects	Worth	9,981,504
MERO	-	<u>41 projects</u>	Worth	<u>5,459,701</u>
TOTAL:		191 projects	Worth	\$31,234,650

There are over 50 independent countries in Africa not including the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia.

During 1970-76, the IDRC supported 73 projects in 24 countries.

During 1976-80, the IDRC supported 118 projects in 29 countries.

There are around 20 countries in Africa in which the IDRC has never had a project. These include such places as Angola, Congo, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Libya, Malagasy Republic, Mauritania and Somalia. (See Appendix E for a complete list). It should however be mentioned that, in a number of these countries, contacts have been established and the readiness of the Centre to consider project requests made known officially.

The suggestion that the IDRC needs to expand its coverage in Africa by supporting new projects in countries where to date it has had few or none is not greeted with widespread enthusiasm among IDRC staff. It may be that a few countries with some research capacity have been ignored in the past by some Divisions either because they lacked a presence in the Regional Office or lacked staff with the necessary language competence or knowledge of or interest in the countries in question. Certainly, the weakness of the WARO Office is viewed as a contributing factor

to this state of affairs. Arguments are made then by some staff that new exploratory efforts should be considered. Also some countries such as Guinea, Angola and Mozambique have been prepared only recently to relate to western donor agencies and to seek support for research from them. They could be considered as possible sites for new or increased support.

Staff, however, for the most part reject the concept that the IDRC must have a presence in all countries. Indeed the absence of country allocations is seen as a plus in IDRC's style of operation. Although it might be politically advantageous to operate in all African countries, it might not be the appropriate position for the IDRC to take. In the past the Centre has generally not felt rigidly constrained by Canadian government political attitudes towards a given country in deciding whether or not to support research there. Much has and will be said about the range of research capabilities throughout Africa but suffice for the moment to state that most IDRC people feel that some countries do not have a sufficient research infrastructure to make it feasible for the IDRC to work there although the countries which are placed in this category, understandably, will vary depending on the program officer to whom you are speaking.

A small minority of staff argue that if the IDRC revamped its concept of what appropriate research for these least, least developed countries was, then research projects could be supported in almost all African countries. However, the consensus seemed to be that given the shortage of staff time and money which are already placing constraints on project preparation and monitoring, the IDRC does not, under its present structure, have the resources to attempt to nurture programs in every African country including those which have extremely weak institutions and few trained researchers. This reasoning leads some to suggest that the Centre should concentrate its efforts in fewer countries, an issue which will be discussed later in more detail.

CRITIQUE OF IDRC POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN TERMS OF THEIR APPROPRIATENESS FOR IDRC OBJECTIVES IN AFRICA

1. Centre Appreciation Of Functioning In Africa.

Does Centre Management (Including The Board of Governors) Appreciate The Technical And Administrative Difficulties Of Functioning In Africa?

The difficulties which have been described in Part IV, sections 2 and 3 above, cannot be dismissed by the Centre in its planning just because they are unattractive or because quick neat solutions are not easily prepared. The IDRC field staff feel that the Ottawa based staff, particularly administrators, do not have a clear awareness of these difficulties of operating in Africa. In the foregoing paragraphs we have outlined numerous circumstances which make it difficult for Centre staff to do their job in Africa and which make their lives often arduous and sometimes dangerous. They have a point in their claim that the Ottawa staff do not always appreciate their situation. It is difficult to appreciate it unless you are living with it, even though one may have worked in the area at an earlier period or occasionally travel to or in African countries on missions from head office. This difference in interpretation is only serious if it creates a morale problem or if it pushes people to concentrate their efforts elsewhere for fear that their work in Africa will not be appreciated and fairly evaluated by management. There are signs that this is the case with some Centre staff.

African project directors are faced with the same kind of administrative difficulties and also expressed concern that the IDRC did not always seem to appreciate them. Those involved in world wide network projects often felt that the non-African co-ordinators did not seem to understand their particular problems. The problem faced in getting technical reports and letters typed in good English for the IDRC was often mentioned. Difficult as it may be for an Ottawa-based administrator to appreciate, it can take a week to get a short letter typed correctly and a lengthy technical report may take a month.

In many institutions one cannot yet take trained technicians, mechanics, accountants, secretaries and clerks for granted. One American who recently returned to the US from a position in an African university commented on the effect of this on his counterpart: "No matter how qualified, dedicated and energetic he is - I and my secretary are better than he and his secretary."

For these reasons the IDRC overseas staff and African project directors feel that administrative memos from the IDRC Ottawa often indicate a lack of sensitivity and understanding about the difficulties involved in functioning in Africa. Staff understand that the development of a personnel system was necessary but feel the Centre has overdone it. Some of the memos relating to these developments now are viewed as out of touch with reality, oppressive and morale sapping.

At the same time staff feel that the Board, by its actions, does not seem always to appreciate what can be expected from research work in Africa. In terms of obtaining clear results, which will influence policy, the staff feel the Board sometimes expects more of research projects in Africa than we would normally expect of projects in Canada.

2. The IDRC As An Organization

Does The IDRC's Structure And Present Style Of Operation Affect Its Ability To Function In Africa?

(a) The Ottawa Office

Many staff expressed the feeling that for several years the greatest threat to Centre quality has been its growing bureaucracy. Many staff members, including some on the Management Committee, feel that this Committee has become stale and needs an injection of new ideas from other professional staff in the Centre.

An overly controlled bureaucratic organization may kill the entrepreneurial spirit necessary in its staff to accomplish great things and could lead (is already leading some say) to more navel gazing than outward looking. This is not just an African issue. It is an organizational issue but it affects the work in Africa.

It is important to remind ourselves that the key to having good projects in Africa is finding a good researcher who is able, energetic, honest and committed. Similarly the key to having the Centre operate successfully is to hire these same kind of people. Tying down staff with too many rules, and leaving them with the taste that the administration feels they are trying to "rip off" the Centre, is not a good way to increase productivity and foster dedication and harmony. Some Centre field staff feel that the administrators in Ottawa do not trust them anymore. Some African researchers expressed the same feelings. The Centre appears to be facing some morale problems which appear to be more than the usual tension one expects to find between head office and the field.

These problems have not just appeared but have been building for some time. No doubt they are part of the natural spin-off as a new organization ages. Nevertheless they are real problems which have to be faced.

Numerous staff commented favourably on the more open consensus approach to decision-making at the top which has emerged recently. Yet they feel that power in the IDRC is so centralized within the Divisions that a consensus on many issues is difficult if not nearly impossible to achieve. Division Directors are seen by many of the staff as having too much power. One hears the comment: "there is not one IDRC, there are four IDRC's".

The mechanism of approving projects in the IDRC is seen to hinder cooperation. By the time a proposed project is shared openly across Divisions it is almost impossible to inject a new element into it from the perspective of a different discipline. To do so would leave a staff member open to charges of obstruction by his colleagues.

Some staff wish the Board would spend more time debating policy issues. The feeling is that to do so would help make the Board more aware of the problems the staff face in Africa and elsewhere. Once the Board has approved a major program area, must it then deal with each new project within that area? Could they not better use that time to absorb the necessary information which would allow them to deal with more policy issues? These are some of the questions posed by the staff about the Board.

Staff from other agencies are critical of the fact that we give our senior men in the field so little authority, particularly over financial matters. Many expressed surprise that the Centre has been able to keep some of its senior staff for so long.

Although working for the IDRC in the early years was never seen as taking a career position some people have stayed for a considerable time. Should thought be given to establishing some career ladder structure combining periods of work in head office and overseas? This might lead to better staff training for some junior people and a break from the hectic travel schedule for senior program people. As one person outside the agency who has been familiar with the IDRC's operation for some time put it " You wear your best people down - tire them out and then wonder why morale drops or the old spark of the early days is hard to find."

An increasing amount of time now is spent by program staff in writing the project summaries for the Projects Committee and the Board. The idea that projects which do not have lengthy documentation will get shot down along the approval route may be a myth but the staff believe this and respond to this pressure. Staff feel that Division Directors are overly concerned about having a project rejected which they would view evidently as a criticism of themselves. Staff question whether this is a productive approach to take.

The Governors perhaps do not realize that when they ask questions about items not included in the summary their questions trigger off a kind of knee jerk reaction down

the line which leads to more detailed, more technical, project summaries in the future. The project summaries have increased in length so much that they can no longer accurately be called "summaries". Much more technical methodology is included and great efforts are made to show that the project will have an impact on POLICY. Arguments are made that if there is any pressure on the staff it is only to push them to explain clearly what the researchers are going to do; why they are going to do it; who will benefit and what the institutional capabilities are. These are all reasonable questions to ask. Many staff however felt that there has been pressure to write much lengthier summaries and said this was being done to please the Board. Others said, more bitinglly, that it was being done to "snow" the Board. Others spoke of IDRC staff becoming involved much more in gamesmanship within their own organization. For whatever reason, considerable time from an overworked staff is being spent on these summaries.

A side issue to this point is the fact that the gap between the actual project, and what the project summary describes, is often great. Some would even argue that the original goals of the research project often become badly twisted in this preparation. The summary may be seen by some as a complete working plan for the project but it may often be a most unrealistic one.

Pressure for project summaries which answer every possible question, and are therefore unassailable by the Projects Committee or the Board, leads some staff to fear that risk projects which should be supported will be squeezed out. Some staff said that even if they could find the time to help nurture an exciting but risky project they would still not bother to present it because they realize the chance of it being accepted even within their own division is low. It is hard for the authors to believe this is what the Division Directors or the Board wants. How does one explain these attitudes then? Some people feel that it is an example of some staff avoiding difficult aspects of their job and using their Director and the Board as an excuse. Others say it is more directly related to the fact that the staff is overworked. Some say that if the IDRC wants to support some creative but risky research projects it has to operate its own organization in a creative and sometimes even daring fashion.

(b) Regional Offices

The most persistent comment raised in discussion on this subject was the question "Why did the IDRC close its Nairobi Office?". If one accepts that it takes more staff time to develop projects in Africa and that projects once underway need project staff, then to most people it would appear logical to have as much IDRC presence in Africa through regional offices as is reasonably and economically possible. If the desire is to have more and/or better quality projects in Africa then to most Africans and other agency people the closing of the Nairobi office is a confusing decision. Let there be no doubt that this decision raised concern among African government officials and researchers and other aid agency people interested in the development of research in Africa.

People inside and outside of the IDRC fear that years of gradual building of contacts, reputation and confidence have been hurt. Like everything else in Africa, it takes a lot of time - not to mention skill and patience - to build a reputation and relationships there; but, as in other places, they can vanish in a twinkling. Africans find it difficult to appreciate that the entire office had to be shut down for budgetary reasons. Centre staff, while appreciating the budgetary constraints, felt that cut backs could have been made to accommodate the financial problem without creating the loss of confidence which the total closing of the office caused. Some staff resent that the Regional Directors appear to have had little input into how reduced funds might have been allocated to give the Centre the best possible representation in all areas where the Centre works. They also find it inconceivable that the Centre would close the one office which had been consistently operating in a useful and efficient manner. There is confusion by African researchers and by Centre staff as to whether the intent is that East Africa now be serviced from Cairo.

The fact that AFNS has kept one of its staff members in Nairobi has softened the blow but has placed an enormous load on this person (Bruce Scott). Some people spoke as if the IDRC did in reality still have an office in Nairobi and they come to Bruce with their requests and their

problems. Ottawa staff from various Divisions still draw upon he and his secretary for support. Thus he not only serves as a liaison person for AFNS and an associate director of one of their program areas but is also seen by many as the unofficial IDRC regional representative.

He appears to be doing an excellent job in this multi-faceted role but surely this is not what the Board intended when it closed the Regional Office. Some might suggest that Bruce just turn aside all requests which lie outside his specific terms of reference. Bruce's response is that, although he may be able easily to say "no" to requests from other IDRC staff, it is not easy to turn away African researchers without further harming IDRC's image in the region. Our observation is that it is not even easy for Bruce to refuse requests for assistance from other IDRC staff. Indeed we had the distinct feeling that some Centre staff, who had not been particularly supportive of the Regional Office concept before, better understand its importance now that EARO is no longer functioning.

From the inception of regional offices there has been confusion and disagreement within the IDRC about their role and their importance. It would seem as if there is still not a clear idea of what their purpose is. Some Division Directors appear not to want the Regional Directors to have any involvement in program development. They see the office mainly supplying administrative support for programs which they and their staff alone will determine and manage. However, many program staff based in Africa, or with a major commitment to that continent, argue that Regional Directors there should have some substantive input into the development of programs in Africa. The feeling of these staff people is that the Ottawa staff are not familiar enough with the African continent and are not as committed psychologically to its development. There is annoyance, even anger with some, that in the past Division Directors and senior administrators seldom visited Africa and the few times that such visits took place little or no time was spent travelling outside of the capital cities to visit rural areas or projects. Efforts during a Board meeting in Africa to hold a comprehensive briefing and field trip

to educate Board members about the IDRC work in Africa were ignored by a majority and this was a disappointment to the Regional Office and program staff .

Regional Directors appear at times to have been reduced to glorified office managers. With increasing demands to prepare and send reports to, and to satisfy other bureaucratic demands of, Ottawa, where are they to find the time to advise the Centre on national priorities, to evaluate institutional performance, to furnish other information about the region and to help the program officers stationed at the regional office to work together in order to make maximum use of their time? Is this indeed what the Board expects of these Directors?

Some Regional Directors in Africa in the past have been chosen as if a major part of their work was to be diplomatic and ceremonial. The policy is to appoint Regional Directors from the region and one logical deduction of this is that the Centre wants the Regional Offices to operate in the style of an organization of the region; which, it may be argued, is how MERO and WARO have operated. Yet it also seems at other times that these offices are expected to operate like Ottawa too. We believe that there is a conflict here which, sooner or later, must be resolved.

There is also a sense that African institution directors and researchers care more that the Regional Director runs an operation that can respond effectively to their needs than that they attended the University of London or the Sorbonne together. Most staff feel the offices should be much more concerned with program support than with playing a diplomatic representational role for the Centre and that they should be run as much as possible according to the best definition of what an IDRC Regional Office should be and do.

An increasing number of people interviewed also felt that Regional Directors should spend much more time familiarizing themselves with research institutions and research capacity and priorities. The present job description for the Regional Director says he should provide intellectual

leadership. There is a feeling among many Centre staff that there are some countries and institutions in Africa about which the Centre knows very little. Asking certain program officers about these places confirmed the above assumption in many cases. The staff often had never been to these places principally because of time constraints. Perhaps Regional Directors should be doing more of this work? If the Directors can and are prepared to provide this leadership, the question still remains as to what vehicle do they use for their inputs, and from where shall the time come?

Some staff members feel that it is significant that the Office of the Vice-President International has been changed to the Office of the Vice-President for Planning. They hope this means that the Regional Directors will have inputs into the evaluation and planning process. Others are more skeptical and say that, even if they have an input into evaluation and planning, they will still have no input into program development with Divisional Directors who in the past have been careful not to let them influence program planning.

Staff feel that any re-evaluation of the closing of the Nairobi office might be used to consider new types of regional offices. Some believe that much smaller, less elaborate and costly, offices could be operated successfully. The argument here is that it would make more sense to be present in more places in Africa and that the present offices have been too widespread and have become bureaucratically unmanageable. Some staff want additional sub-offices in West Africa and suggest that the concept of smaller offices might make this possible. By small they are suggesting a Director, administrative officer, two or three program people, and the local support staff.

There is substantial concern about the inability of the IDRC to function across Divisions. How can the IDRC urge African researchers and ministries to do this when they cannot manage it themselves? The desire to work across disciplines and across Divisions is strong among field staff who feel the major barriers are in Ottawa. The

general feeling is that the only place where the staff get together across Divisions is in the field although, as offices and numbers of projects grow larger, it becomes difficult there also. People say they are just too busy and absent too often to foster this reality and spirit of cooperation and interaction.

(c) Overseas Staff Posting

Each Division has taken its own approach to posting its program staff. Some Divisions have placed generalist liaison officers in the Regional Offices, some have placed program specialists who had a specific world-wide program responsibility. Some program specialists have run regional programs from Canada or from some other developing country. There have been young officers-in-training and there have been "old hands" with decades of experience. There are legitimate arguments for all of the approaches used. However, many people told us that if the IDRC wants more quality projects in Africa, strong regional offices are needed and they should be staffed by people who, either in a liaison or program capacity, have a regional rather than a global responsibility. This goes against another of the original principles of the IDRC's style of operation but it appears to be a necessity if one is to function successfully in Africa. Numerous people would say that, if the IDRC is not prepared to deal seriously with this issue, then it should consider reducing its involvement in Africa.

For Regional Offices to assist effectively in the formulation and administration of projects it is of the utmost importance that the right people be sent to the right places. In the selection of field staff, questions such as the following might be pertinent:

- Does the Division have, or expect to have, a program in the region?
- Does that program, by its nature, need the support of a nearby staff member?
- Is the person under consideration the right person to monitor the activities of that Division in that region?

- Is this candidate a "field" type?

Clearly there have been numerous occasions when nothing so rational and systematic has been followed. Some field staff, we have been told, were posted overseas because

- it was thought that somebody could profit from overseas experience;
- somebody wanted to live in, and work out of, a particular place;
- somebody thought that the financial benefits overseas were attractive;
- somebody wanted, or somebody else wanted him or her, to learn another language;
- somebody was making a nuisance of himself at head office.

3. Project Selection Development And Monitoring

- (a) To What Extent Is It Feasible Only To Support Projects Which Reflect Local Priorities? (The Question Of Responsiveness - vs - Suggestiveness")

As to Criteria (i) (does the proposal fit into a priority...?), generally in Africa there is no central body or document which expresses research priorities in any useful detail. Even multi year "plan" documents are often too general for specific project selection purposes (e.g. "increasing agricultural production" is a priority).

National science councils, by whatever name, are rarely entrusted with the effective coordination of research priorities, selection and investment although, in Franco-phone Africa, more of an effort is made to have donor agencies work through one national body. Whatever their intention, however, usually these bodies are merely advisory groups and pitifully thinly staffed even to perform this function.

A recipient is often reluctant to risk making specific requests which may be outside the donor's interests, or conversely to question donor decisions or recommendations which may not suit the recipient or even to refuse something which may not be needed or even wanted. The problem is sometimes compounded when prospective recipients deal with an agency like the IDRC which according to its policies is "responsive" rather than arriving at a recipient's door, in the mere conventional fashion, with a kit of things which it "does".

In theory at least, the IDRC approach to identifying a project it will support is, as its first project criteria says, to determine if it fits a priority expressed by a government or research institute. Of course, it must also, again theoretically, meet the other five criteria including being in one of the disciplinary fields covered by the Programme Divisions.

When the IDRC began its operation this was a very different approach from most bilateral and foundation donors who generally decided in advance the kinds of activities they would support if demands for such assistance were forthcoming.

The unfamiliar IDRC approach therefore sometimes confused, and even made suspicious, prospective recipients who, to their question: "What do you do!" (i.e., what projects do you want to support?), had thrown back at them by Centre staff: "Tell us what you want to do and we'll see if we can support it." (i.e., what are your priorities?).

The IDRC, it seems, has gradually diluted its pure responsiveness over the years. Dr. Hopper used to refer to the "smorgasbord" it puts out on the table. In other words, while still not telling prospective recipients outright what it wants to support, it only puts certain "dishes" (disciplinary areas) on the table from which they may select their fare. (Indeed criteria number vi, which has been added to the list relatively recently, indicates that the Centre will have areas of concentration.) The IDRC has also encouraged prospective recipients to accept support in certain areas because it felt it had in-house expertise in them or because it offered the opportunity of collaborating with similar programmes in other regions as part of formal or informal networks. or even just

because in its judgement it believed they were important. In other words the IDRC in these situations thereby more or less actively suggested to institutions and researchers that they carry out a project in a certain field. Clearly by now the IDRC Program Divisions have research agendas in which they are interested. Some staff are most blunt in expressing to researchers their limited area of interest. Indeed in some cases Centre staff have been making a strong "selling job" for their particular research priorities. Hopefully the IDRC's preferred research areas represent a response to developing countries' general research priorities but it is a limited response based mainly upon available funds and IDRC's professional expertise and judgement.

The opinions of African researchers on these various approaches were solicited. Not surprisignly, most were in favour of every approach. They felt it is proper and helpful for the Centre, in fields where it has expertise and can actively assist recipients, to propose projects. On the other hand, all felt that the Centre should not abandon something which is viewed with appreciation -- its capability to support an activity which a country feels important but which the Centre may be less enthusiastic about and/or has no staff competent to give professional assistance.

Some African researchers are angry however because IDRC staff encourage them to submit proposals based on local priorities and, when they do, the IDRC often turns them down saying that they are not what it wants. This, they say, is often done without the IDRC explaining why the projects are not what it wants.

It is of course extremely important to explain to researchers what the IDRC is (an increasingly simple task as it becomes better known), what it does, and even more important, what it does not do. This dissuades planning offices and institutions from sending off to the IDRC a bunch of proposals (often already turned down by other donor agencies) which do not fit IDRC project criteria and/or disciplinary areas of possible support, and avoids raising expectations unnecessarily.

The process whereby the Centre identifies projects has progressed considerably since the early days when heavy reliance

was placed on the contact lists of a few experienced staff members and suggestions made at diplomatic functions. Now the Centre has a somewhat better sense of country priorities and local conditions, more and more experienced professional staff and a growing bank of contacts. And of course the Centre is much better known than it was ten years ago so that, in addition to the projects which are actively sought, a number of requests come in from developing countries on their own initiative.

There is a sense that some recipients do not take project proposals too seriously. That the important thing is to "get a project" which then will create employment, generate travel, acquire equipment and bring money. Then, once the project is underway, everything can be sorted out. The inexperience of many donors understandably aids and abets these feelings and practices. This is where good professionals come in - people who know their organizations, the disciplinary area, the recipient country and development in general.

Some IDRC staff feel that often the organization lacks the contacts to have substantive discussions with governments as to what their research priorities are, even if Centre staff time was available. Some research institutions, who feel that their collaboration with the IDRC came about as a result of a chance meeting between one of their researchers and an IDRC staff member, would like a more systematic approach. They would like to present all their proposed projects at the beginning of the year and ask the IDRC to indicate in which it would have an interest. Centralized planning groups in some Francophone countries feel even stronger about this. They resent the IDRC working up individual projects bilaterally with various groups instead of endorsing and supporting research priorities established by the central body. This is an attractive theoretical concept which perhaps should be tried with a few Francophone countries who are used to the "commission mixte" annual donor-recipient meeting format. But one can be skeptical as to whether or not, in most countries, you would be just interposing yet another layer of bureaucracy between the donor and the researcher. Most African researchers and Centre staff feel these layers should be kept to an absolute minimum.

It has been suggested, finally, that an organization like the IDRC should concern itself more with activities which a recipient and it believe to be important but which, for a number of reasons, do not command a "high priority". For example, remote sensing may be seen as extremely important for the identification of areas suitable for agriculture, which is in turn essential for food production, but the activity will attract little support if people are starving and a more immediate concern is feeding them by whatever means and even if only for a short time.

(b) Are The IDRC Projects Seen By Recipients As "Their" Projects Or As "Our" Projects?

Fundamental to the philosophy of the IDRC, and the bedrock of its objectives and its project criteria, is that a recipient is doing something the country feels worthwhile, something the country positively and manifestly wants to do, that it is "its" project, and that the IDRC is merely providing the financial wherewithal, some logistical support, and perhaps a little professional counsel and friendship.

Unfortunately, with any project financed by any external agency, it is difficult for a research group to really feel that it is carrying out its project and not the agency's project. This is explained by many factors.

First of all, the way in which a project is viewed by the recipient is partly a consequence of how the project was initiated. If the project was "proposed" in one way or another by an IDRC staff member, as is sometimes the case, this lessens the feeling of local proprietorship. Some research centres listed IDRC supported research as contract research as opposed to research which their centre had chosen as a priority.

Then there are the demands made upon the recipient by the generally systematic and well organized donor. The Director of the Algerian cereals breeding program once complained that the "CIMMYT project" there took all his trained researchers leaving just scraps over for the national research program. Never mind that -- at least theoretically -- the Algerians had asked for the project. The explanation for this

voraciousness was that externally financed projects are so much better organized, the staffing arrangements are laid out from the beginning, all the resources of the institute get sucked into it and the donor agency has staff to assure that project undertakings are respected.

And, most especially, there are the indigenous professional staff "seconded" to the externally financed programme, generally without dispensation from their regular posts (which they are expected to continue in) and without supplementary remuneration or "topping up". The "topping up" issue is discussed in another section; suffice to say here that such staff resent additional duties for no extra pay and quickly blame "our" project to which often, and perhaps not surprisingly, they contribute little effort.

- (c) What Kinds Of Research Should The IDRC Support? Should The Research Project Have To Be Tied Directly To Some Potential Action?

This question relates to number (ii) of the Centre's project criteria - (Will the research help close gaps in living standards and lessen the imbalance in development between rural and urban areas?). For some Centre staff this is a crucial criteria against which they try to measure all their projects. In AFNS, and Health Sciences in particular, one of the key questions asked of potential grant recipients is "Who is going to benefit from this research?". If there is not some evidence that the project is potentially linked in some way with criteria (ii) the project proposal will not likely be high on the Division's priority list. This concern to see that the research the Division supports will be of benefit to someone, and hopefully to the poorer segments of the population, has to be balanced against our earlier comments to the effect that numerous staff, particularly in the AFNS Division, justify many of their African projects not on the research results but on the training benefits received by the researchers (who of course might then use this new training to do further research which could be of direct benefit to people).

There are in the IDRC (mainly in Social Sciences) some people who have a substantially different approach to this question.

Their position is that if they wish to become involved in more projects in Africa, where the research tradition is weak and the number of researchers is small, they must be less concerned with seeking out research proposals which fit an IDRC priority or which fit into a multi-country network project or indeed which have any direct link to policy. Instead, support should be given to individual projects whatever they may be which may not be related but which are well thought out and show some signs of success. Through these efforts the research community can be strengthened and may eventually take on projects which fit into some pattern which the IDRC sees as significant (the AWAREAC program is an example of this).

Some of these people would argue that selecting only projects in which the IDRC has a professional expertise is certain to ensure that the Centre is not responding to local priorities. The counter argument is that the IDRC cannot respond to all local priorities and should not since the ability of its staff to have a professional input into local projects has been one of the mainstays of IDRC's success. To support numerous projects in which the IDRC has no professional expertise is to lose this basic strength.

The compromise suggestion is for each Division to reserve in principle a small percentage of its budget for projects which do not fit the Division priority list but are projects which a local research group clearly sees as a priority. Our assumption was that this was always the case with the IDRC but in some Divisions it would appear that arguing for this style of operation has become more difficult over the years.

A minority of staff feel the Centre has limited involvement in some least developed African countries because of the definition of acceptable research. Some Centre staff do not think the IDRC should be supporting basic data collection yet many Africans state this as a high priority because of the shortage of basic data in so many fields. As one person put it, the data is not of much use if the analysis is unskilled. On the other hand, if the data is poor no amount of good analysis will help you. If you have poor data you have nothing. The purpose of much research in Africa is seen not to provide practical answers to particular priority problems but more generally to foster an intellectual atmosphere

in which problems can be rationally addressed. While this would be acceptable to some Centre staff, it would be seen by others as going against the main purpose of the Centre.

Some staff feel the Centre is too tied to supporting research which ties in with international standards or which they hope will receive international recognition. Their position is that the research that is appropriate to the priorities and capabilities of some countries is very simple. It is more concerned with improving agricultural production not from five to ten tons per hectare but more likely from five to six tons per hectare with inputs the farmer can afford.

These staff members feel that if the IDRC endorsed this approach, which they see as the original intention of the organization, it would be possible to find research projects in any African country. They are passionate about these feelings although many of their examples sound more like good extension work than what is usually described as research. This clearly is a debatable point.

Other people (particularly some Africans) claim that the Centre is not prepared to deal with the priority research of some Africans because of their reliance on descriptive rather than analytical methodology. This, they say, quite often means that francophone Africans are neglected by the IDRC.

Centre staff, following the criteria of the Centre, argue that they will support any methodology as long as it can lead to research results of practical worth. The issue arises no doubt more frequently in the Social Sciences than in other disciplines although the AFNS is also faced by researchers who, while dealing with a practical problem, do not want to go out to the farms or the forest to try and solve it. As one person put it, the debate on methodology sometimes takes on an ideological cast and the North American quantitative methods are seen as being synonymous with a form of cultural oppression while qualitative approaches are seen as being in the vanguard of liberating ideology.

Some Africans argue that research actions of the Western model is aimed at reproducing the values, attitudes and

language of the Western bureaucratic capitalist elite. The response of some Centre staff is that with some Africans there tends to be more of an interest in polemical argument and a ragged resort to data than is congenial to most North American researchers.

In this question of research ideology, where the dependency philosophy with Marxian overtones competes with the neutral or pro-capitalist mode, the Centre should theoretically be able to work with both as long as the researchers base their position on facts. If the assumption of the researcher is that nothing can be done within the present system then research of the nature the IDRC would support is not going to be of much help.

(d) Who Should The IDRC Support : Universities Or Government Research Groups?

Some people argue that the IDRC should concentrate its support on government research groups whether they be within a ministry or functioning as a separate institution. These people feel that university researchers are for the most part conducting armchair research aimed at obtaining a thesis for faculty promotion or increased status in the academic community rather than at solving practical problems. This criticism was frequently admitted by university officials themselves. Doing field work out of many of the universities is clearly a difficult proposition just from a logistical point of view (problems of rural contacts, transportation, per diems, etc.). Some Centre staff are not interested in working with university groups even if they are working on issues articulated as government priorities. These staff members prefer supporting only government researchers. They realize that if they work with ministries it may take longer to develop a project but feel the potential pay-off is greater.

The quasi autonomous government supported research centres in some countries (many of which are relatively new) may be able to improve on both university or civil service wages and working conditions and thus make it more attractive for researchers to continue in research. Unlike universities, where researchers can often pursue their own interest, in these institutions research is generally applied to seeking solutions.

Others argue that the best scientists will usually be found in the universities so the IDRC should go there. Working in the Ministries, furthermore, can require more technical assistance. They also note that bureaucratic difficulties make it difficult for an aid agency to work with a ministry. These people agree that theoretically the relatively independent, government sponsored, research centres should be able to offer conditions which make it more attractive for researchers to remain in research but, at the early stages of development, political appointees often dominate their leadership and thus weaken some of their theoretical strengths; most are at this stage.

To others the answer is in increased co-operation between government ministries or research institutes and university faculties. In some situations where these groups used to see themselves as rivals they are now exploring increased co-operation. In Tanzania, for example, the government does use the university for much of its agricultural research. There is a clear linkage, at least according to stated policy.

When choosing universities as recipients of project grants there is the possibility that the assistance can end up being a hindrance. For example, giving major grants to small departments with only one or two staff members may be a premature move which does not help the development of the group. Also the influx of foreign money to some individuals can create jealousies among their colleagues who may then not give the kind of assistance that one might hope for and which indeed the project is dependent upon. In some cases relatively junior researchers are managing research projects much larger than people of equivalent status in North America would be asked to handle. The fact that support services for research may not be available means that the researchers may have to handle all details, (for example in fisheries research they would deal with everything from renting boats and buying nets to setting up a lab for tests).

With the hierarchial organization in the universities, projects there can only operate through a department head who may be

a great asset or may ruin the project depending upon his personality and ability. The danger is that research becomes part of the individual patronage system. In the context of a single national university the absence of alternative opportunities can lead the insecure to be obsessed with preserving their own position rather than dealing with issues of substance.

(e) Should IDRC Staff Assist Local Researchers In Writing Project Proposals?

The question of the extent to which Centre staff should be involved actually in preparing project proposals is an important one. Although many IDRC staff would still hold up as the ideal that local personnel should write the proposals with minimal contributions from IDRC staff, the reality seems somewhat different. IDRC staff appear to have substantial input in writing many proposals. Some staff would say that in their field, if they want projects in Africa, they have to write up the proposals for the local people.

This involvement has perhaps increased as the pressure to submit projects has increased. One person said the IDRC should not confuse a government's interest in sorghum research with its inability to draw up a proposal. Again we go back to the present level of inadequate secretarial and clerical help plus, of course, for various cultural reasons, the virtual impossibility of some "professional" Africans to stoop to assist in this kind of work. Some people suggest that in a few cases the IDRC staff person has drawn up a general project proposal which relates to a government priority, and then has gone looking for some researcher who will take on the job.

IDRC staff input in shaping the proposal continues as the project summary is written. In attempting to anticipate questions of the Project Committee and the Board, some staff say they re-shape the project drastically, often distorting it considerably from what the researcher originally proposed and wants.

Although this distortion of a researcher's interests and plans through an IDRC staff person reshaping the proposal in Ottawa would not be received favourably by many, Africans are often apparently happy to have IDRC staff help in drafting original proposals. Many scientists simply have had no training in drawing up research proposals. Since there are few clients asking for certain research work, the scientists are left on their own to develop proposals. Many of the less well known people have no outside contacts to whom they can easily make proposals. They are therefore often delighted when the accommodating IDRC staff member offers assistance in this task.

It might be mentioned that, as researchers come to know what it is that will attract foreign funding, they begin to write their proposals in that terminology. Many scientists now realize that they cannot get funding easily without singing the tune, for example, of rural development. This priority, strongly endorsed by many funding agencies, may be a useful lever to swing some of the attention of bright researchers to the practical problems of rural development. At the same time the IDRC staff people have to be alert for the charlatans who have learned the terminology but are not truly committed to these issues.

(f) Is There A Shortage Of Professional Staff Time To Develop And Monitor Projects?

One of the cornerstones of the IDRC's approach has been that its project staff are experienced professionals who not only deal with administrative aspects of developing and monitoring a project but are available for substantive scientific inputs as well. The comments we received suggest that this approach is in jeopardy, at least in Africa.

There is a general consensus that, on the average, it takes longer to develop a project proposal in Africa than in other parts of the world because of the level of expertise and experience available. Staff feel they have less time to nurture along an idea put forth by an inexperienced, junior person. They are more likely to ignore these rough proposals and

concentrate on supporting projects from people at the middle to high end of the experience spectrum. If true, this is a serious issue for one of the key policies of the IDRC was to help the less experienced researcher get his/her start.

By the same reasoning, the monitoring of many African projects might also require more time as the IDRC staff person assists the local researchers with advice in moving the project along. Clearly not all projects require the same amount of monitoring but projects in Africa are more likely to need a maximum amount of staff time and, in many cases, the staff no longer can find this time.

It has been suggested that, for large and/or complex projects, especially those with supplies and equipment components, and depending to some extent upon recipient institutional and general country conditions, somebody should go into the country when the project is starting up to help set up record keeping practices, explain report preparation etc. It should be a person who both knows our administration and financial procedures and who is familiar with the operating procedures of the Division supporting the project; it would finally help, as always, if he has a little couth and savoir faire. After this initial visit, follow-up visits should be arranged as required; in the very least developed countries they could even be quite frequent.

Many Centre staff feel that their professional skills are not being utilized as effectively as they would wish. Some think they should participate in the research rather than just analyze and criticize. Some staff feel that their least concern in monitoring should be the financial one yet often it is all they have time to do.

Although clearly some projects are being well monitored (particularly those which have a project coordinator or a staff person with a disciplinary focus mainly in Africa) there is criticism by African researchers that they do not receive enough critical comments from the IDRC. They are not visited often enough and do not reap the benefits of the knowledge that IDRC staff have of comparative and complementary projects. Also the Africans resent the fact that often little critical analysis is made of their technical reports. They object to the whirlwind

visits of IDRC staff when they do come. Often Centre staff arrive on weekends and want to accomplish all their business in an afternoon and be gone. In Mali they are called the experts who visit "entre avions" and the practice causes a good deal of resentment. Experts who have only a short time, we are told, tend to use most of it talking themselves. They are accused of taking little time to listen to recipients' situations and what they really should be hearing often would not come out until they had been in a place for two or three days.

Clearly there are too few visits and the visits which are made are generally of too short duration. It is difficult, when planning a travel itinerary in Ottawa, inevitably involving visits to many countries and complex connections, and wishing to make the maximum time economies, to appreciate such almost inevitable surprises as devoting the first day in countries establishing that, yes, you have really come when you said you were coming, having to cobble together a programme because none is ready, finding nobody there who you can see

One project leader kept saying to one of the writers of this Report that he had never seen an IDRC professional during the life of his project. We found this impossible to believe. Only later was it realized that while we think of all the IDRC program staff as professionals, many of them are now monitoring projects which are outside their area of disciplinary expertise. Thus, in these situations, they tend to stick to administrative matters and project leaders see them as administrative persons rather than professionals.

Although these criticisms are disturbing they have a healthy side in that African researchers are not asking to receive IDRC money and then to be left alone. They respect, and want the involvement of, IDRC professionals and just feel they are not getting enough of it.

IDRC staff for their part acknowledge these criticisms as accurate. To a considerable degree they say they no longer have the time to visit a project for two or three days to become familiar with recent progress, to listen to the researchers,

and then to offer constructive advice and criticism. Often long intervals occur between even these abrupt visits. Some Divisions, which used to have a rule that every project be visited once every six months, have been forced to throw that rule out of the window.

At the same time many staff members in Africa feel an increased pressure to produce more projects and spend the budget. Some are frustrated by the superficiality of much of what they were doing and feel more and more that their main business is dispensing money. Those who feel this pressure the greatest, move to work more in Asia than in Africa, for projects can be found more quickly in some Asian countries with more, and experienced, researchers in long established institutions.

All these activities require staff time and raise the question of the percentage of money being spent on administration. The UN says project management should not be more than 14%. But since their projects are large and often have a high degree of capital investment, this 14% will not necessarily be high enough for an IDRC style of operation. The Treasurer's Office now does not list program staff as administrative although most staff did not appear to know that this change had taken place.

Some argue that the IDRC needs more technical staff available for what is virtually technical assistance work on some projects (as distinct from monitoring). The existing staff is not enough to assist effectively in the accomplishment of project objectives. Other agencies and African researchers felt it was unbelievable what we expect of our staff. Each AFNS program staff person for example has an average of fourteen projects to monitor. On the other hand, some Ottawa administrative staff have doubts on this issue. They have a concern that in some cases people are coasting on past laurels. They feel that some Division Directors are not utilizing their manpower in the most efficient manner.

(g) Summation

Many Centre staff do not feel that Africa is ready for an exclusively "responsive" approach and that it would be more sensible, helpful and appropriate for the time being to offer a limited "smorgasbord" of solid, fundamental fare from which (some) recipients may choose. It is the conviction of most IDRC staff that if they had not been active in promoting fields of research and individual projects to be supported, not to mention taking an active hand in writing proposals and shepherding them along the recipient's approval route, we would have had many fewer projects than we have had and not such good ones.

Many researchers accept this as a necessary stand for the IDRC to take. But they wish the IDRC, when they go searching for projects, would not cling to the illusion that they are fully responding to local priorities. The IDRC should be more willing to state its own philosophy and research priorities and force local people to refine it if they are not in agreement. Being completely responsive, we were told, does not work, and the IDRC's past history of turning down project requests which express local priorities but did not satisfy Centre references has weakened the Centre's credibility. The IDRC should be more honest in stating its interests and should perhaps even focus its efforts further, hopefully always leaving a small proportion of grant money for the interesting project which does not fit the expressed priorities.

4. Administration Of Grant Funds

Should The IDRC Administer A Higher Proportion Of Grant Funds?

The basic IDRC philosophy is that local institutions should administer as much of the grant as is possible as this is seen to be part of their education and experience in developing research capacity. A majority of Centre staff interviewed agree with this principle and are reluctant to see the Centre administer most or all of the grant funds. The Centre has generally tried to restrict the Centre administered portion of budgets to such items as international travel and out-of-country training.

Some IDRC staff are still talking as if it were a rigid rule that the Centre does not administer grants or purchase equipment. Other staff on the other hand are not loathe to argue the case where they see it is necessary.

Most Africans would agree with the basic Centre approach and the principles which motivate it, if one is talking about technically learning how to handle budgets and keep accounts. They ask for IDRC support in teaching these skills to them and are pleased to hear of recent developments in the Dakar office where a full time representative of the Treasurer's Office has been posted who can both explain the necessity for some of the reporting procedures and help them learn how to handle the required financial reports.

But beyond that they ask what can they learn by having to wait months for project money to be released by their own Ministries of Finance, or equipment to be purchased by a government bureaucracy that is cumbersome, inefficient and over which the individual researcher, or often even her or his research institution, can exert no influence.

In Africa one must purchase through tender boards, which have nothing at all to do with the researcher and his institute, and which are notoriously slow and inefficient. Is tying up researchers while they struggle with tender board people and procedures - about whom and which they already know all the ghastly things there are to know - really teaching anybody anything worthwhile? Is it a price which the scientific program really should be asked to pay? We suppose there would be some benefit if people, continually frustrated by tender boards, would complain enough to have them improve but few would be sufficiently sanguine that this could happen to bother making the effort.

In section IV 3 we dealt with examples of some of the frustrations faced by researchers who had to deal with these bureaucratic problems. We could go on at some length with variations on these themes.

In the experience of many people, availability of money per se is much less of a problem than actually getting it, most

especially when it is deposited in the government exchequer account, or even in individual ministry accounts where they exist. In other words, what is actually provided in the "Estimates", or provided by an outside donor agency, is not easy to touch. Indeed considerable amounts of the government vote are returned by Ministries each year because they did not find a way actually to disburse it. In the research stations it is flexible money that is needed. If the Director of an institute and an IDRC person can jointly control the funds, they can be used on short notice to meet urgent important needs and make things work. Of course few institutes by law are entitled to have their own bank accounts.

Again from Africans and from other agency people we received the firm impression that the IDRC should negotiate hard for realistic appropriate conditions for project management when drawing up contracts and that it should be ready to administer grant funds when and where the conditions warrant it. Even a Permanent Secretary in government (he had once received an IDRC grant as a researcher) urged that the IDRC take this position. We asked if members of his government might not be annoyed at such a position and he replied: "one or two might be annoyed officially, but underneath all of them would recognize it as necessary."

IDRC projects are respected for the quickness and practicality by which they get things done. The staff will fight for any arrangement to assist the local researcher to do her or his job. If it is necessary to have the freedom in the project to appoint local support staff, instead of using civil service procedures, they will fight for this. The government may not officially like it but these staff members feel, when it is absolutely necessary to get things done, the IDRC should push for special arrangements and in extreme cases even be prepared to do some of the administration itself.

In the beginning of the Centre's operation, staff usually talked of separate project bank accounts. Then as we learned more of country laws and practices, and consistent with the Centre's philosophy of having recipients handle as much of the grant funds as possible, and in their way, the Centre gradually gave ground. The experience has not been happy. Should we re-think this whole issue now?

61.../

On the other hand what we would consider to be a majority of the staff still would like to hold to the principle of local administration. These people feel the IDRC has to choose the institutions it wishes to support, then trust them to do an honest efficient job, and not let IDRC staff have a close involvement in week-to-week administrative decisions. Some are prepared to back away from this when it appears extremely necessary while others see it as a rigid principle. Some would argue that in the Francophone countries, with their more centralized co-ordination of aid money, it is more difficult to make special arrangements (other agencies would agree but say it is not impossible). Many feel it is wrong to use an IDRC mechanism to get around a local bottleneck and make a project work by circumventing the system. They would support using the grant as a club to help clean up a local bureaucratic mess. This might not be relevant for the IDRC because its grants, unlike those of the World Bank for example, are not really big enough to be used as a club.

No matter how much the Centre tries to foresee all that is necessary to allow a project it is supporting to meet its objectives, and to provide to this end the total package of needs, yet if the Centre sticks to its criteria, which constrain it to work through national governments and their procedures (especially financial), and through local institutions and people, so a project is necessarily dependent upon them and its success is necessarily qualified by how well or how badly they perform.

Although some IDRC staff seem unaware of it the IDRC, from its inception, has always been prepared to administer a large portion of grant moneys. A look at the records show that even in the IDRC's first year of operation about 30% of grant funds were Centre-administered and for the period 1976-1980 the percentage has remained approximately at that level. (Contingency amounts, usually about 10% of a total project budget, are included in this 30% figure). Some researchers have made it clear that they will not take any IDRC grants unless the IDRC will handle all purchasing of materials and equipment. It would appear that some staff need to be aware of this and, in circumstances in which their Divisions permit them to, be prepared to offer this arrangement. This might avoid the situation where projects have been held up for long periods before the IDRC program officer has agreed to

ask Ottawa to handle purchases. More purchasing of material and equipment seems indicated, at least if projects are to be expected to progress. A growing question will be how much of this work should be done by the Regional Office staff?

5. "Topping Up"

Should There Be "Topping Up" Of Salaries?

This is an emotional issue which splits the staff. In some Divisions the split would appear to be along Canadian vs Third World lines with Third World staff members arguing that topping up in some cases is necessary and legitimate. The pressure for topping up is different in different parts of Africa, being high in the MERO, moderate in the EARO and low in the WARO regions respectively.

For many people their salary is not seen as a liveable wage and they take on other jobs to survive. Thus if the IDRC or a University pays a teaching salary while a researcher is working on a project, the question is how much of the researcher's time are you buying? If the IDRC expects all of his or her time to be devoted to the project, their argument is that you will have to buy both her or his teaching and consulting time. Thus the extra salary is not seen as topping up but just as buying the person's full time. In Egypt, the Academy of Science encourages researchers to expect financial incentives for doing research and indeed 25% of the Academy's budget is for incentives.

If the IDRC wants more projects in Africa some staff members indicate they could certainly obtain more projects if these additional payments would be offered.

Many IDRC staff however continue to argue against this so-called topping up of salaries. They agree that with topping up the IDRC could get more projects and keep more researchers doing research work. But they argue that if an African government wants to buy a Mercedes instead of paying adequate adequate salaries to ensure that they have enough scientists then the IDRC should not top up salaries because it means that the IDRC then is indirectly paying for the Mercedes. The

researchers should not need topping up because the country should make research a high priority and, after all, we are only theoretically supporting something it wants to do.

The counter argument to this is that we know that few African countries make research a high priority. As we have already stated there are at the moment too few African clients who want to purchase the results of research. A purist might argue then that the IDRC should not be supporting research in such countries and should put its money only where there is clear evidence that the government sees the need for research and has given its support to the research community. If the IDRC has decided to support projects in spite of the lack of national research support and indeed has taken on the role of encouraging the development of an interest in research, then does this not pull the rug out from under the above basic argument against topping up of salaries?

The issue is not as clear cut as either of the two above arguments would suggest. It is clear that throughout most of the African universities there is little official incentive for a person to undertake research, particularly the time consuming field research in which the IDRC has a high interest. If the IDRC wants a full-time project director, they may have difficulty obtaining one even though the project agreements provide for one. Kenya, for example, officially allows civil servants to be involved in outside commercial activities. Thus the chairmen of some university departments run businesses on the side. Some of these people we were told do not really want extra research responsibilities unless remuneration or possible political prestige is involved.

The World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and other large agencies are hiring people to do work as if the researchers had no other job. The result is to commercialize research activity and to start a bidding war among granting agencies for good researchers. Too often perhaps the researchers rather than doing problem-solving applied research are paid to do evaluative research which the international agencies need for their own purposes.

One might argue that the IDRC should clearly not enter such a bidding war. Yet again it is not clear cut. If a staff

member works with a local group for two years to develop a project and then, at the last minute, UNDP gets to support the project because it does not mind paying a \$50 a month topping up of salary to which the IDRC objected, clearly the IDRC staff person feels depressed in such a situation. After all his effort he wanted to bring in this project to the Board. If the IDRC puts on pressure to have more projects in Africa, and if staff are being evaluated on their ability to bring in projects, tension on this matter will increase. It should also not be surprising then that topping up of salaries has crept into IDRC projects although in most cases this additional salary has been hidden.

The logic of IDRC's principles against topping up runs into some conflict when one compares salaries in different African countries. For example the IDRC would object to paying \$50 a month topping up in one country where salaries are low but at the same time might pay \$1,000 for the full time services of a Junior researcher with an M.Sc in a country such as Senegal where salaries are high. The response to this from IDRC staff who are against topping up is that even if one thinks \$15,000 is high for a researcher in Senegal, the IDRC can pay this because it has to go along with the local salary structure. The argument from other staff is that by paying so-called topping up amounts you may just be following the same principle - that is paying what is expected in the local situation. Some African researchers could not understand why the IDRC would not give topping up for hardship posts even though the government itself accepts this practice. Some researchers reminded me that it is the IDRC which is so anxious to get researchers to work in these hardship posts in the field.

The most sensible thing would appear to be not to have an overall policy on topping up and to be prepared to deal with situations in different countries differently depending to a major extent on the advice given by Centre staff in the field offices. If these extra salary amounts are to be paid they should be out in the open. This avoids the hypocrisy of stating one policy which some researchers know is being ignored by other people in the same agency.

The point was often made that incentives to researchers does not always have to be in the form of extra salaries. Incentives could be in the form of money for typists or administrative assistants, travel for conferences, journals and books, or a more generous per diem.

The per diem offered by universities in some countries is considered by researchers to be less than minimum possible subsistence. Yet these are the rates usually used by the IDRC in setting up project budgets. One project director said this made it difficult for him to get his colleagues to travel to field sites. As there is little university reward for doing field research, if the arrangements are difficult and could in the end even cost them money, they will refuse to go.

Another Senior researcher working on applied research with IDRC support was not making a plea for increased salary. His plea was rather to have a small amount of time each year to continue with his basic research. As he put it, if the IDRC would offer him some travel money and a per diem (no salary) for one month a year to allow him to update himself in his own specific basic research interests, he would be pleased to spend the other eleven months working on applied research which he hoped might have some more immediate pay-off to his country.

6. Expatriate Technical Assistance

Should The IDRC Be Supporting Technical Assistance And The Use Of Expatriates?

Criteria (iv) would suggest that the IDRC should be giving its support to local rather than expatriate researchers. However, given the acknowledged shortage of trained and experienced researchers, almost all Africans and other agency people underlined the need to use expatriates in many of the research projects. Thus if the IDRC is holding off supporting them, it is not because most Africans are demanding it. Unfortunately, in parts of Africa the shortage of researchers and the weakness in

administration and financial management really mean that, in situations where the aforementioned conditions exist (and the latter is almost a definition of when and why a country is "very least developed"), if the donor agency does not assign an expatriate advisor who can assist with the project both technically and administratively (and we believe the second role to be as important as the first) the likelihood is low that you will have projects of any real worth to anybody, whether in terms of scientific results per se, training, building institutional capacity or whatever.

The high cost of expatriates is a growing deterrent although many argue it is better to do something well at high cost than have low costs and poor results. Take a project which might cost \$400,000 over four years without an expatriate advisor, and \$600,000 with one. Assume also that you have concluded that without an advisor you cannot realistically expect to achieve project objectives. Is it not a better investment to spend the higher amount and to achieve something, rather than to disburse the lesser amount and almost surely end up with nothing? Spreading money around as widely as possible is fine, but it is like manure - it has to be spread thick enough for the crops it is intended to fertilize to grow.

The suggestion is not that there necessarily be one advisor per project. An advisor could be posted in a convenient place from which he/she could have useful inputs into as many projects in her or his field as would be practically possible given all the conditions. Staff people who spoke of this concept spoke of one advisor working with a number of projects in her or his field (not part of a network) whereby the advisor would be part educator, part scientist, and part travelling co-ordinator.

Although the level of acceptability would be higher in some countries than in others, the advice we received was that, as long as the expatriates were not placed in line positions, they would be accepted almost anywhere and, if the Centre is looking for reasonable results, in many projects they are needed.

Having argued this point these same people would hasten to add that having an "expat" on a project does not guarantee

anything and that the selection of the "right" type of person is crucial. In many ways North American researchers, working on IDRC projects in Africa, have to be "turned upside down". In North America they are recognized for what they accomplish and what papers they generate. In Africa, working as an advisor to an IDRC supported project, they are rewarded more for how much they are able to help others accomplish. This is not an easy transition. It is difficult to lead without appearing to lead and hard to keep calm when the usual research supports are not there. AFNS have had considerable success using CUSO personnel whose capability has been adequate and whose attitude has been appropriate and cost low.

In the field of agriculture the international centres may provide consultants both for project development and for training for the young researchers.

Perhaps more attention might be paid to using expatriates in short-term consultancies to assist projects. This means engaging contract personnel who not only have the intellectual capabilities but who also have, or who will develop, the skills and sensitivities needed to do or assist research in the area under question. If the IDRC moves in this direction with Canadian researchers, can they avoid the political pressure of having to share these consultancies around rather than building on strength?

Many staff members indicated that if they were able to use more "expats" on the projects they felt the projects would go better and they would obtain better results. Thus some argued that, while "topping up" of salaries related mainly to increasing the quantity of projects in Africa, the use of expatriates was linked to improving the quality of projects.

RR.../

Also, for projects that were being used mainly to train researchers, the involvement of an able, experienced research advisor is especially important. The posting of key advisors to work with one or more institutions might be useful to develop their training capacity, to help select students for outside graduate work and to help young faculty develop research capacity. Again, although the IDRC is requested to do this both by Africans and other agencies, many staff people would question whether or not IDRC money should be directed toward this kind of activity.

Perhaps a greater effort might be made to see if more use be made of other Africans as consultants, particularly those skilled researchers who are political refugees.

7. Institution Building

Should There Be A Role For The IDRC In Institution Building?

Institution building as policy, again because of the Centre's size and resource limitations, seems beyond its capacity but it should be ready to do it in some appropriate scale and with selected institutions which, in one of the designated areas of Centre program concentration in Africa, have demonstrated seriousness and probity in the carrying out of Centre funded projects and, if not competence exactly, at least the prospect of achieving it with Centre assistance.

Longer term projects would, in some instances, achieve a form of institution building or at least, if not build a whole institution, build one of its departments.

8. Networks

Should The Centre Use The "Network" As A Major Vehicle For Supporting Research; What Other Cooperative Mechanisms Might Be Tried?

Networking is one area in which the IDRC may be said to have been a pioneer (A Report on Network Strategies is under preparation for the OVPP)

This approach is an attempt to satisfy criteria (iii) and there are many kinds. In AFNS support, for example, for a particular crop (fabba beans) is being developed in different parts of the world and each researcher is anxious to benefit from the specialized information network which IDRC has developed; then there is a network based upon a piece of machinery and there is little necessity to share a large amount of information.

Transportation and visa problems make it difficult to establish African networks where considerable exchange of information and techniques is needed. The suggestion is that in Africa there are at the moment too many super-structures of networks without firm foundations. (U.N. Networks, CAFRAD, CODESRIA, East African Management Institute). The suggestion from some is that the IDRC might give support to some of these networks but should not encourage the development of more at this time. Some of these networks need people support in the form of technical assistance just as much as they need funding. Where a new network is deemed advisable the general consensus was that it should be a small one.

The network is seen by some as a potentially useful tool but many feel that the IDRC should move to support a research group at one institution as soon as they are ready to work on a project. Holding up support while attempting to establish a network may cause them to become discouraged and perhaps lose key members of the group. Different groups who begin to work on similar projects may eventually develop some linkages, even a "network", but many staff feel it should not be necessary to develop a formal network and even less to impose one from the top down. African organizations such as CODESRIA have found it difficult to get different research institutions in different countries to work together on a common project. It has been difficult in numerous cases even to build a network of cooperation among institutions in one country. Thus they have had to scale down their idea of what is a reasonable network and have given up the idea of having grand continental linkages. The feeling of some other donor agencies is that if you are trying to promote research in areas where it has little foundation or support, what is required are decentralized non-network projects which in time, when they themselves appreciate the advantage, and upon their initiative and from the ground up, may develop collaborative arrangements.

Some staff like the idea of having small networks undertaking small projects which allow young researchers to get their baptism in field-based research. Out of these beginnings hopefully they will learn how to develop a better Phase II. Centre staff are concerned that the Board might be reluctant to support the Phase II's until all the network participants have completed Phase I. In any network, even the best, there are always a few laggards. Should this hold up the others indefinitely? Some interviewees felt that in some cases the IDRC has helped to stimulate an interest in potential network participants and then left them disappointed.

African members of some IDRC international networks sometimes complained that the Asian or Latin American research coordinator was unsympathetic to the African conditions and pressed them so hard for results which they could not easily obtain, given the time and research skills at their disposal, that they often wished they had never heard of the IDRC. Some staff feel that through the networking concept the Centre sometimes tries to impose Asian technology and performance standards on Africa. Others argue that some staff are prone to develop artificial networks and to use the name to impress or to please the Board. There is also a feeling among many Africans with whom we talked that something done in one African country might be of use in another one but results from Asia were not likely to be very useful. This is felt more keenly in the Social Sciences than in the agricultural field.

Desirable as they are in theory, we do not think that Africa, by and large, is ready for network linkages in the way that Southeast Asia seems to be. The political facts of life severely limit the possibilities of undertakings which are avowedly regional in nature. There is a significant absence of strong regional political organizations which can be used as a basis for technical cooperation. Linguistic and logistical obstacles only add to the barriers which militate against large networks.

The suggestion is then that criteria (ii), which suggests that research results should have useful application over a region, should not be vigorously applied in Africa. Where networks do seem possible, the advice we received was that they should be small

ones. In numerous program areas it will be difficult enough to find long-term country specific projects to support without even contemplating the large network style which the Centre ideally favours.

Another criticism raised of network projects is that it draws researchers away from national priority programs and focusses some of their attention on issues raised by the international group. This criticism is most often raised by people working in Ministries who are combining research efforts with the administration of delivery systems. Administrators in universities or research institutions were less concerned with this. They felt the international network offered good training opportunities and felt such efforts would not adversely affect research on national issues although it might lessen the amount of free time available to researchers. Those people with positive views still urged that networks be small (two or three research groups).

For the reasons mentioned, the Social Sciences Division seems to have moved a considerable way away from the network concept in Africa. When the network concept was initially set up, the idea was that networking would help to ensure that the field of research being supported was an important one and it would also serve to maximize quality through peer group assistance and pressure. If one does away with networking, what steps will then be taken to bolster the ability of the IDRC to deal with these two issues?

If the sharing of research methodologies and results by the network method is limited in Africa, then the increased use of workshops to disseminate results can be considered. It would appear that the Centre, in the past, has been fairly active in running workshops in Africa, within the context both of specific projects and established networks. The information we received was that they usually have gone well. But the Centre should always be on the lookout for instances where exchanging data and arranging inter-project visits could be useful to specific programs and might foster further the practice of co-operation among African researchers. A few project staff did ask why they did not receive detailed research data - as opposed to printed Centre publications - on other Centre supported projects in their field. Some staff

argued that successful individual projects could be used more as training centres for other researchers. A few people expressed the desire that some simple didactic manuals for training be produced as part of a successful project rather than the glossy publications the Centre now produces.

9. Research Results - vs - Training

(a) Should The Focus Of Centre Activity And Expectation Be On Obtaining Useful Research Results Or On Building Local Capacity?

"Stay out of country X in Africa because you cannot get good research results."

"Go into country X but be satisfied to use the research project as a training mechanism."

These are the two extremes one hears when questions are asked about expanding IDRC's work in Africa. Although some staff members make a plea that the Centre should not get hung up on the research -vs- capacity building argument, it would appear that this issue continues to be a dilemma for most, although a consensus is perhaps slowly emerging.

No one questions the great scarcity of research capacity in most African countries. Although some African countries are better off in some fields than others, it is not unfair, as we have said, to speak of most of Africa as having low research capacity. Where the IDRC has been able to concentrate on funding research projects in Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and in some African situations, it has been because other agencies and governments have been making the complementary investments. In Africa, clearly institution building and formal training to produce researchers will require long term commitments (at least one decade based on the experience of others).

Some people said that the IDRC will be remembered for the creative effort it made in changing ideas towards research

in developing countries and for pioneering a less paternalistic attitude among aid agencies. It will not be remembered for the research results it obtained. There was even a suggestion that the Centre should feel proud of what it has accomplished, phase out the present Divisions and start over again!

A surprisingly high number of IDRC staff justified their African projects on their contribution to training and not on the research results obtained. Most people stressed the need for capacity building but in the final analysis it was clear that they were not arguing for a long term commitment to formal institution building and training including scholarship support for MSc's and PhD's. Most see this as being on the periphery of IDRC's mandate. The exception to this rule they would argue is in situations where the IDRC is opening up a field of research in which they are the main, if not the only, donor agency. In such cases most people would agree that the Centre has a responsibility to support formal training programmes related to this field (an example might be the Science and Technology Policy Workshops at Sussex).

Having suggested that this consensus appears to be in place, there is still considerable evidence in some projects of money for formal training and a continuing disagreement over the extent to which one can justify research projects on the basis principally of the on-the-job training it provided for the researchers.

Of the 786 projects the Centre has supported to date, 286 of them have identifiable training components. Of the 191 projects that have been funded in Africa, 101 have had identifiable training components. (Note: Multiple grantee projects, with several training components, are regarded here as only one project with one training component). In terms of dollar amounts in African projects for the period 1970-76, \$914,000 out of the \$12,795,000 or 7.1%, was expended on training. From 1976 to 1980, \$1,605,000 out of \$18,425,000 or 8.6%, was spent on training. Another interesting comparison is that in the 1970-76 period in Africa almost as much was spent on consultants as was spent on training (\$828,000 -vs- \$914,000) while in the later period (1976-80) much more was spent on training than on consultants (\$1,605,000 -vs- \$816,000).

The pre-project and post-project awards, and the training awards included by some Divisions as part of the research budget, are sometimes argued by staff as being an essential ingredient in the success of the project. Yet the evidence for this claim appears scanty. Many of these trainees undertook long term training programs leading to graduate degrees and thus did not return until the research project was finished. Some took positions immediately upon their return in fields unrelated to the project. It would be interesting to have a statistic as to how many ever worked on the IDRC supported project which generated their training award.

Our impression from talking to staff is that few would fit into this category. In most cases the training award essentially seemed to be another contribution to general capacity building. If it were clearly acknowledged to be this, would the Board be willing to approve so much money for formal training programs unrelated to project results or would it demand firmer and more formal assurances of links between training, the project and results?

We are also left with the distinct impression that IDRC staff feel that few of the African projects have produced notable research results. There are clear exceptions of course but many projects are seen as not having produced useful results, while having been poorly conceived, carelessly administered and poorly executed. Some staff members are pessimistic enough to suggest a pull back on African activities or at best a holding action until more research expertise is in place. Other program areas feel that the expertise is now starting to arrive on the scene and opportunities will increase to support small beginning projects which are not linked to networks or to any overall IDRC priority.

Other staff remind us that building research capability is a major part of the IDRC mandate and that while extensive training scholarships may not be appropriate, the funding of research projects which are primarily used as training exercises is appropriate. If the Centre does wish to assist in the building up of indigenous research capacity then they have to deal more directly with the training issue. If junior researchers are taken away from the project for any training it may require more revolving technical assistance to insure

that the work of the institute continues to get done while the trainee is away. It may also involve expatriate supervision during the period immediately following the training period.

The debate continues then as to how much an untrained or ill-trained researcher can learn on the job. The argument is that first degree holders confined to on-the-job research training may well be able to carry out simple research procedures but are less likely to have the skills, or be able to pick up the skills, necessary to analyse the results. The feeling of some staff is that trained and experienced researchers might, in some types of projects, successfully use BA's to gather data which would then be analyzed by the experienced people. However they did not see these projects being used successfully for training beyond a low level.

Any increase in the number of research projects whose main focus is training also will require more staff time by IDRC program officers. The feeling of many people is that the IDRC has not really faced up to this issue.

(b) What Training Of African Researchers Should The IDRC Be Supporting?

Where it is determined that some formal training should be offered, the sense is that no training should be given at the BA level and there are growing sentiments against Ph.D. training. There have nevertheless been some requests to the IDRC from African governments to train people at the Bachelor's level. The IDRC has responded negatively to this type of request and indeed to most general requests for scholarship support, saying that CIDA handles this type of training. But this is no longer the case. CIDA, along with some other donor agencies, has moved away from offering general training scholarships arguing sometimes that the trained personnel do not stay in the fields for which they were trained and at other times suggesting they do not want to contribute to another situation such as India where large numbers of degree holders have no jobs. However, the Indian analogy is hardly

relevant to Africa where there are still important shortages of highly trained people in virtually all fields. The pressure of these shortages is what is pushing some IDRC staff to continue to seek general IDRC training support for Africans at the same time that they reluctantly acknowledge this type of activity as being perhaps beyond the scope, and certainly beyond the resources, of the IDRC. It will require some long term commitments to building up different areas. Perhaps the IDRC could do a short report documenting this reality which might be used to encourage more training support from the large bilateral agencies?

Without this type of commitment in various disciplines, African countries likely will be no further ahead ten years from now. FAO, World Bank and other such agencies will no doubt have more Africans working for them and undoubtedly the IDRC itself will have attracted some of these people to its own ranks. However, universities, government ministries and research institutions would likely still have grave shortages and it will still be difficult for the IDRC to find enough trained researchers with the time to undertake projects which the IDRC might support.

There are some areas where Canadian institutions could play a key role in training (e.g. forestry and fisheries). The IDRC, which is supporting forestry research in Africa, has an opportunity to train most of the Francophone foresters over the next few years as there are no university forestry departments in Africa and French universities have set admission criteria which are too high for most Africans at this stage. Other agency people see this as a golden opportunity for the IDRC and could not understand the Centre's slowness to run with it.

If one looks at the people trained by the IDRC and finds that they are not working in the field for which they were trained, how does the IDRC justify that training money? We have no exact figures for this although reports of individual staff members indicated that this was often the case. In one project 14 were trained in order to provide one person to carry on with the project. One of the first CIDA projects in Kenya was the undertaking, shortly after independence, to support and eventually "Kenyanize" the Njoro wheat breeding station, a venerable institution founded by Lord Delamere early in the century. An initial four-year project was extended a second four years and then a final two. In the

ten years in all, twelve Kenyans were trained in Canada in the gamut of relevant agricultural and biological sciences. At the end of ten years one of the twelve was working at Njoro. Court's study of Rockefeller scholars shows a similar trend. Most Africans said this should not be a concern to us for the IDRC was adding to the general pool of trained people in the country. This may be an acceptable argument for a large bilateral aid agency to use but we question whether it is an acceptable one for a small agency whose emphasis is on research.

It was said by some African researchers that first degrees should if at all possible be obtained at home so that local conditions and realities, and especially limitations, are thoroughly experienced and grasped. They added that these new BA graduates should also work at home following the first degree for the same reason. Then, and only then, should one go abroad for specialist training. Clearly the increased cost of overseas training is also influencing people's thinking.

One research director suggested that good BA graduates be hired to work on IDRC projects. After one year the best of them might be sent overseas for MSc course work. The field work for the degree might be done back home working on the IDRC supported project. Then the best could be sent for PhD training with field work again being done on the project. If, after the PhD was obtained, they went elsewhere, the Director felt the research institution would have received good value from them. This scheme implies, of course, longer project terms than the IDRC will presently offer.

Although a project may not be seen as a training exercise, it may often turn out to be one. The Project Director may be using the data to get a graduate degree. This may interfere with the schedule of the project and should be faced. For some projects the main result may be a PhD degree.

The conditions attached to IDRC training awards in the past were not standardized and this has created friction. As a result the question has been raised as to whether all training awards should be administered by the Human Resources group with the Program Divisions having considerable say in how all awardees (including those for Pearson and Research Associates awards) are chosen. In recent months steps have been taken to standardize the terms of similar awards given by different programs.

At a time of declining revenues, some staff suggest that the Research Associate Award should be discontinued, at least in Africa. They suggest there are better ways of using this money in Africa. It might pay to take a few more risks with younger people, sending a number of them to have short periods of on-the-job training in another African country.

10. Expansion Or Concentration

Should The IDRC Tend To Concentrate Its African Work In Terms Of Both Geography And Programs?

Canadians tend to think of "Africa", as though it were a single country and more or less the same all over. (A few months ago, one of the authors was in an elevator with a Senator he knew. To a question about where he had been recently, he replied that he had just returned from eleven years in Africa. To which the Senator commented: "Yes, I hear they're having a lot of trouble in that country.")

The Centre staff, of course, have a much different view of the African continent. They are aware of its economic, geographic, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political diversity. Mozambique is as different from say, Ghana or Tunisia almost as any one African country is different from Canada. This reality inevitably leads the Centre to the question of whether or not the Centre should concentrate its efforts and, if so, in which countries. Necessarily this size and diversity imposes some limits on what the staff can know about Africa and, therefore, upon the disciplinary and geographical areas where the Centre can expect to make a useful contribution.

Some other donors have decided that with small staffs they can only hope to maintain a sufficient on-the-spot familiarity with national settings and research possibilities in a limited range of countries. It is clear to them that the prospects for self-sustaining institutions capable of playing strategic roles in their fields of endeavour are still very limited in most of the continent's smaller and poorer countries. Thus, they are prepared to limit the number of countries in which they will operate. Some of these people felt

that the IDRC was spreading itself too thinly and a few strongly advocated that it should concentrate in a few countries in which its talents and local resources were best matched. One person advocated that the Centre might choose the Maghreb as an area of concentration, for example.

Some Centre staff agreed that the IDRC should limit rather than expand its field of activity in Africa. They were prepared to see the Centre focus on doing a better job by concentrating its work within a few institutions and in a few countries.

Other staff members argued that the Centre has a responsibility to the entire research community in Africa rather than to any particular country, although they acknowledged that, to date, most program areas had, in fact, confined their activities to a limited number of countries.

The question to ask then is whether the countries chosen are really the most appropriate ones in which the IDRC should work. Are other more appropriate opportunities being ignored because of personal bias or language limitations of the IDRC staff?

Another argument made by Africans and IDRC staff alike is that research work done in one country may be of value to other countries in which IDRC is not working. This may be true in some aspects of AFNS work in food production, or vaccines, and in some Health Sciences research; but many research results will be seen by the recipients as being country specific even if they could be more generalized.

11. Size Of Projects

Is There Any "Best" Size For Projects Supported In Africa?

The general consensus is that the success rate of large research projects in Africa has not been good. Large projects are often poor performers because they are too ambitious, involve too many people, overwhelm the administrative resources and ignore the high mobility of researchers. Before the project is half over three of the five key people may have moved on to something else leaving the project in major difficulty because replacements are hard to find. Large projects may encourage local groups to take on a level of analysis which may be very difficult for them to complete, especially with limited computer capacity.

80.../

There have been suggestions from staff members that more small projects (\$50,000) should be supported in Africa as opposed to projects in the \$200,000 plus range. The feeling is that with a weak research tradition, a shortage of trained researchers and a setting in which people move from job to job quickly, it makes more sense to help a researcher get going on a small project, and then gradually increase his ability to handle larger ones. Smaller projects will produce good data in good time while facilitating development of the competence of individual researchers. Various other agencies and institutions confirmed that in general the experience with large research projects in Africa has not been good. With small grants many agencies feel there is a much better ratio of benefit to cost.

Of course a small project may require as much monitoring as a large project. The monitoring demand will depend more on the capability of the researcher, the strength of the recipient institution and general country conditions than upon the value of the project. Thus, with a shortage of staff time, the pressure is on to develop large projects. As one former staff member put it "many of the best projects are small, locally developed, difficult to find, costly to run and taxing to monitor".

Although understandably there is a strong desire for a substantial local component, it may be necessary to start by funding almost 100% of the research. Then, the IDRC should help the researchers to convince their government or other local institutions to pay for some of it. (How much actual counterpart cash has there been in IDRC projects?). In some cases a large grant may result in the improvement of an institution where a good staff was previously in danger of being broken up as a result of lack of funding.

Should the IDRC reconsider its position against funding individuals through small grants? Other agencies do it and such a program might help deal with some of the administrative problems. When we talk about a move to smaller projects, are we in fact talking more about grants to individuals, or to small groups of two or three? The Canadian Connection - Third World Returnees Project of the Social Sciences Division is an attempt to find a new way to support research through small grants. The point has been made that if small projects become more popular, consideration will have to be given to give project officers more responsibility in financial decisions. As one person put it, cumbersome clearance procedures with headquarters in the matter of very small projects is not cost effective.

Small grants again may often respond better to immediate needs. They also do not strain the research management capabilities of

universities and other institutions and may help to avoid the administrative problems and headaches which the Centre has encountered with many large projects in the past. A note of caution is needed to emphasize that we are not recommending only small projects. Some grants in \$100,000 - \$300,000 range have functioned successfully. Indeed, from time to time the Centre has been criticized for not moving in a large enough way to exploit some useful results into a major success. As one person strongly argued, "It is possible to expect too little of a project, just as it is possible to expect too much."

12. Term Of Projects

Should The IDRC Consider Long Term Support Of Projects?

The size of a project notwithstanding, it seems that whatever money is allocated should be spread over a longer period taking into account, amongst other factors, the limited absorptive capacity of most recipients. Rather than smaller projects necessarily, we suggest the Centre consider working in fewer fields, in fewer countries and for longer periods. Let us show what intelligently conceived, organized and supported projects, with serious partners, can produce. This could have two beneficial results: firstly, we might build some real capacity which then could help neighbouring countries and, secondly, the same neighbours might realize what they too could receive and do if they can convince donor agencies that they can work seriously and professionally. We hope that this is not too naive but, in Africa, so many roads have proven to be "culs de sac" that one must be constantly on the lookout for, and ready to try, new approaches.

We have certainly had several projects where we have stuffed a lot more money into a recipient's account than, both administratively and scientifically, it could possibly absorb, but the durations of the projects were probably more responsible for this than the amounts per se.

On a continent where virtually all countries came into independence less than twenty years ago, with just a handful of trained professionals (most of whom, and their successors, are now firmly ensconced behind desks in the government administration), two or three years in which to carry out a research exercise to any serious standard is nothing, amounting almost to folly. In fact, it is commonly

said that "year one" of a project in Africa, any kind of project, is "year zero". We should accept that this year is for start up; receiving funds, acquiring material and equipment, engaging staff, arranging training, etc.

Another argument for longer projects can be made by crop improvement program results. As we indicated earlier, longer project support is needed in many cases if one wishes to keep the research program going. Local funds will not quickly be found even for good projects. If an allocation is not in the five-year plan it will be difficult to find money before the next five-year plan.

If one really hopes to get project trainees, who are taking degree programs, back on the job, then a lengthy project period will be needed. Perhaps this is unrealistic and rather calls into question some of the rationale for project training.

Of course, the Centre extends projects, and it grants additional phases for the more serious endeavours with which it is involved, but a twelve-year project, for example, and a three-year project with three additional three-year phase extensions, are not at all the same thing. In one, you plan how things should be best done over twelve years; in the other, each phase is an integral project, with a beginning and an ending, so you have in effect four short projects rather than one long one.

No donor agency would, or probably should, commit itself irrevocably to long term project funding and we would suggest a periodic review mechanism as a safeguard. Every two years or so the donor and recipient would sit down and see if project objectives were being met and on schedule and at these intervals either party could withdraw if not satisfied. Actual financial commitment would not extend, at any time, beyond the next review date. So far as financial exposure the IDRC would not be legally involved in any project any more than it is now but, technically, the projects would be planned on realistic schedules, whatever they might be in a given field in a given country. We do not underestimate the magnitude of the challenge to lawyers and accountants in developing the modalities of such a radical veer from traditional development assistance philosophy and practice.

Africa is a very long-term proposition, and this is the first thing everybody has to realize, and agencies must tailor their participation

in its development to account for this fact. Uganda has shown us what education can do over a hundred years. Malawi has shown us what can be done in 15 years with intelligent, firm leadership which demands performance. The Ivory Coast has shown us what can be accomplished in the same period by being honest enough to admit to shortcomings and by requesting short-term technical assistance from the "developed world".

Project staff's neat time schedule for the Board is often out of touch with reality. If one has small phase I projects, two years is short. It then may make it difficult to obtain a phase II extension because no concrete results may be obtained by then. IDRC staff may then start to put tremendous pressure on African researchers.

Africa is long-term and the crux of what many people were saying is that long-term commitment is necessary if serious work is to be done and useful results obtained.

13. Evaluation

How, And For What Purpose, Should The IDRC Evaluate Projects?

There is a sense that the Centre is timorous in its evaluation practices and that what few evaluations are done are selectively chosen (projects thought a priori to be successful) and that the purpose of them is not primarily to learn from past experience. Some staff members feel that more would be learned from the evaluation of projects which are considered failures. Some feel that every project should, before its file is closed, have some evaluation as its final document.

Views on who exactly are best qualified to carry out fair and intelligent evaluations vary widely: Division only, in-house Ottawa only, Regional Office participation, outside consultants, people from the country or region, etc. What seems certain is that, at present, many projects are in fact not evaluated at all.

14. Project Results Follow-Up

What Steps Are, Or Should Be, Taken To See That Promising Research Results Are Followed-Up?

CIDA criticized the IDRC for not following up on its projects after they are finished. In many cases nothing is done to see if the government or anyone else applies the results.

It does seem that if and when a project looks as if it will produce results which might be useful for development, the Centre should be looking about for some agency - whether national, bilateral, multilateral or whatever - which might take the endeavour into its next logical phase, and be prepared to offer reasonable assistance in the process of transfer.

VI

CONCLUSION

Having dealt with all the above specific questions regarding IDRC policies and practices in Africa, one hopes that the analysis of each question will prove to be of some value to the staff and the Board. Most of what we have said will not be surprising to most staff members. The usefulness to them will be to get their concerns on record for the Board discussions.

At this point one asks: Is there a connecting link or an overriding theme which emerges from this detail? We have acknowledged that the African continent is large and diverse. The IDRC, as an organization, is also diverse and often what can be said of one Division or of one program may not be true of others. In spite of this we think some general patterns emerge from our investigations.

The first is the necessity for all branches of the Centre to be more clearly aware of the difficulties of carrying on research in Africa. We have mentioned numerous factors; among them the shortage of research and research institutions, the lack of funds for research, the problems of communication and travel, political instability, corruption, inflation, bureaucracy and the overall difficulties of management. None of these issues are new to anyone in the IDRC nor, of course, are they unique to Africa. But internalizing one's awareness of these difficulties so that they influence one's own policies and management decisions is often another thing. We cannot ignore them just because we cannot produce quick, easy solutions. Some would say there is a great deal of ignorance about Africa in the Ottawa Office. Wishful thinking might be a more appropriate description. Being consciously aware of the difficulties of supporting research in Africa may suggest different options to different readers. One might argue that the Centre might

- do very little work in Africa,
- work only in the least, least developed countries,
- concentrate its support in a few disciplines in a few countries,
- expand the number of Regional Offices,
- otherwise restructure Regional Offices in Africa,
- assign more program officers to work mostly or exclusively in Africa,
- put together some focussed interdisciplinary projects with all the necessary back-up support,
- be prepared to use more expatriate consultants and advisors,
- establish more program people in African institutions,
- administer more of project budgets,
- change terms, conditions and length of its projects.

There are many more options which could be considered and we do not mean to suggest that there is one clear response to each of them that will be equally applicable across all programs.

Nor are all options seen by us as equally desirable. We would not, for example, want to see the IDRC withdraw from Africa. Yet an argument could be made for doing just this. Indeed some staff in their most open moments expressed the feeling that most of their efforts in Africa were being wasted. We do not wish to exaggerate this feeling but we do wish people to acknowledge its presence.

We would like to conclude with another quote from Meisler in his Atlantic Monthly Article:

"Ten years ago, I left New York on a dark, snow-lashed night and stepped down the next day into the morning glare of Dakar, in Senegal. It was an exciting, expectant time for the newly independent countries of Africa. Since that moment in Dakar, I have spent most of the last decade in Africa. Those ten years did not transform a gullible fool into a mean and narrow cynic, but I feel more critical, more doubtful, more skeptical, more pessimistic, than I did in 1962. I still feel sympathetic and understanding. But I have learned that sympathy and understanding are not enough. Africa needs to be looked at with cold hardness as well.

There have been more disappointments than accomplishments in Africa in the ten years..."

In the Centre's people and experience, resides the knowledge of the realities of Africa from which the lessons may be learned on how to function there as best an outside aid agency can. The objects, structure and style of the Centre have well stood the test of its first ten years. Its Act of Incorporation gives it more flexibility to change than is enjoyed by government sponsored organizations in general. A lot of respect and goodwill have been earned on the African continent. It is healthy that it should look from time to time at how appropriate and effective are its policies and practices to achieve its objects. That some may be found to be inadequate in some respects should not be a matter of surprise to anybody, let alone shame. What is important is

the will to examine the organization with candor, to see strengths and weaknesses where they really are and to move with courage and resolution to take what steps are necessary to keep the organization focussed on its objects and fit to achieve them.

(i)

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The consultants were required :

- (a) to draw on the views of Centre staff and advisors, African scientists and policy-makers as well as other scientists with experience in Africa;
- (b) to determine whether any changes in Centre policies and practices could be introduced to better achieve the objective of strengthening indigenous scientific capability within Africa; and
- (c) further to consultation with the persons mentioned in (a) above, to present any general consensus as well as to provide their own assessment of:
 - (i) whether the general quality, effectiveness and efficiency of Centre supported projects in Africa appears to be lower than in other developing regions with more scientists and larger scientific research systems;
 - (ii) whether it would be possible to significantly increase the number of projects or the number of countries in Africa receiving Centre support without reducing the present quality or effectiveness of projects;
 - (iii) whether the quality and effectiveness (in terms of general Centre and specific project objectives) could be improved by changes in Centre policies and practices in Africa;
 - (iv) whether a change in policies and practices would allow additional projects, if funds permit, to be supported which either do not merit or cannot effectively utilize Centre support within present Centre policies and guidelines; and
 - (v) what would be the advantages and disadvantages of any change in Centre policies and practices recommended in this study.

APPENDIX B

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

President's Office:

Ivan Head

Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Sciences Division:

Joe Hulse
Bert Aillsopp
Gerry Bourrier
Hugh Doggett
Bob Forrest
Andrew Ker
Gilles Lessard
Gordon Mac.Neil
Gunnar Poulsen
Bruce Scott
Abul Gasim Seif el Din
Gordon Yaciuk

Health Sciences:

John Gill
Rashim Ahluwalia
Mike McGarry
Karl Smith

Information Sciences:

John Woolston
Robert Leblond
Mike Brandreth
Jean de Chantal
Gilbert N'Diaye

Social Sciences:

David Steedman
Stuart Brown
Ken King
Suzanne Mowat
Geoff Oldham
Alan Simmons
Tom Walsh

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

Office of the Senior Vice-President:

Louis Berlinguet
David Henry

Office of the Vice-President for Planning:

Nihal Kappagoda
Doug Daniels
Lumpungu Kamanda
Claude-Paul Boivin
John Friesen

Administrative Services Division:

Jon Church

Office of the Treasurer:

Ray Audet

Office of the Secretary:

Jim Pfeiffer
Alan Rix

Former IDRC Staff:

Larry Hannah
Barry Nestel
M.S. Rao
Trevor Chandler
Roger Young

APPENDIX B (cont'd)

OTHER PERSONS INTERVIEWED

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE - OTTAWA

Dr. Michael Oliver

SENEGAL

J. Somczynski
1^{er} Secrétaire et Consul
à l'Ambassade du Canada

Mohamadou Diop
Chef de la section des produits laitiers
à l'Institut de Technologie Alimentaire (ITA)

Dr. Francine Kane
Chef du projet villa psychiatrique
Kénià en Casamance
Hôpital Psychiatrique de Fann

Dr. Louis Sauger
Directeur Général
Institut Sénégalais de la
Recherche Agronomique (ISRA)

M'Baye Diallo
Directeur du département des études générales
Société Nationale des Etudes pour le Développement (SONED)

El Hadji Malick Sene
Directeur des Eaux et Forêts
Secrétariat d'Etat aux Eaux et Forêts

Seymour Mar
Conseiller Technique au Secrétariat d'Etat
à la Recherche Scientifique et Technique

Dr. Addalah Bujra
Secrétaire Exécutif au Conseil pour le
Développement de la Recherche Economique
et Sociale en Afrique (CODESRIA)

Jean Gorse
World Bank Officer in Agroforestry

Dr. Olu Ogunniyi
Executive Secretary
Network for Educational Innovation
for Development in Africa (NEIDA)

Plus numerous participants from Francophone Africa
attending the IDRC workshop on Agricultural Forestry.

APPENDIX CDIVISION PROJECTS WORLDWIDEDIVISION PROJECTS IN AFRICA

<u>Division</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Projects</u>	<u>Total Grants</u>	<u>No. of Projects</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total Grants</u>	<u>%</u>
AFNS	1970-76	128	\$28,072,806	36	28	\$ 7,618,410	27
	1976-80	176	37,398,560	65	35	12,861,500	34
SS	1970-76	104	18,211,061	16	15	1,593,581	8
	1976-80	96	15,411,664	17	17	1,174,728	7
IS	1970-76	51	7,399,491	8	15	1,816,548	24
	1976-80	54	11,398,057	11	20	2,112,170	18
HS	1970-76	48	10,488,802	13	27	1,805,232	17
	1976-80	98	11,714,640	20	20	1,470,455	12
COM	1970-76	2	85,000	-	-	-	-
	1976-80	6	105,095	-	-	-	-
SVP	1970-76	6	535,633	-	-	-	-
	1976-80	15	2,921,252	5	33	735,892	25
PRES	1970-76	1	30,000	-	-	-	-
	1976-80	1	100,000	-	-	-	-

APPENDIX DIDRC GRANTS IN AFRICA BY COUNTRY

<u>Country</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>No. Of Projects</u>	<u>Amount Of Grant</u>
Algeria	1971-76	1	\$182,800
	1976-80	1	197,300
Botswana	1971-76	2	220,890
	1976-80	3	181,160
Burundi	1971-76	-	-
	1976-80	1	251,800
Cameroon	1971-76	1	9,800
	1976-80	5	708,825
Central African Republic	1971-76	1	35,500
	1976-80	-	-
Egypt	1971-76	6	332,843
	1976-80	15	2,225,900
Ethiopia	1971-76	6	1,475,645
	1976-80	7	1,426,805
Ghana	1971-76	4	897,050
	1976-80	5	845,620
Ivory Coast	1971-76	-	-
	1976-80	1	160,000
Kenya	1971-76	7	721,150
	1976-80	9	1,102,890
Liberia	1971-76	-	-
	1976-80	2	1,089,000
Malawi	1971-76	-	-
	1976-80	2	231,900
Mali	1971-76	3	824,690
	1976-80	8	1,718,942
Mauritius	1971-76	1	94,700
	1976-80	1	16,000

APPENDIX D (cont'd)

Morocco	1971-76	1	\$ 44,000
	1976-80	1	29,900
Mozambique	1971-76	-	-
	1976-80	1	52,550
Niger	1971-76	1	141,200
	1976-80	2	233,700
Nigeria	1971-76	10	1,319,551
	1976-80	7	1,015,836
Rwanda	1971-76	1	197,000
	1976-80	1	276,100
Senegal	1971-76	9	2,585,725
	1976-80	7	1,422,550
Sierra Leone	1971-76	1	164,500
	1976-80	7	494,800
Sudan	1971-76	2	345,678
	1976-80	12	1,683,580
Swaziland	1971-76	1	7,000
	1976-80	1	143,400
Tanzania	1971-76	6	1,525,632
	1976-80	6	1,260,910
Togo	1971-76	-	-
	1976-80	2	111,120
Tunisia	1971-76	1	204,800
	1976-80	1	212,900
Uganda	1971-76	1	195,050
	1976-80	2	304,000
Upper Volta	1971-76	3	739,013
	1976-80	4	485,300
Zaire	1971-76	2	468,693
	1976-80	2	322,030
Zambia	1971-76	2	122,961
	1976-80	2	173,961

APPENDIX E

COUNTRIES IN AFRICA IN WHICH IDRC
HAS NEVER HAD ANY PROJECTS

Angola	Gambia
Benin	Guinea
Cape Verde and Sao Tome	Guinea-Bissau
Chad	Lesotho
Comoros Islands	Libya
Congo	Malagasy Republic
Djibouti	Mauritania
Equatorial Guinea	Seychelles
Gabon	Somalia

AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN WHICH IDRC
HAS PROJECTS FOR THE 1976-80 PERIOD

Algeria	Mozambique
Botswana	Niger
Burundi	Nigeria
Cameroon	Rwanda
Central African Empire	Senegal
Egypt	Sierra Leone
Ethiopia	Sudan
Ghana	Swaziland
Ivory Coast	Tanzania
Kenya	Togo
Liberia	Tunisia
Malawi	Uganda
Mali	Upper Volta
Mauritius	Zaire
Morocco	Zambia

TANZANIA

Simoni Malya
Institute of Adult Education
P.O. Box 20679
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania

SUDAN

Y.B. Abu-Gideiri
Chairman
Department of Zoology
P.O. Box 321
University of Khartoum
Khartoum, Sudan

EGYPT

E. El-Mikaaty El-Rashidy
Director-General
National Computer Center
NASR City, Cairo

Dr. Youssef Khalil
Director
National Center for Educational Research
Cairo
(plus numerous members of his staff)

Institute of National Planning, NASR City, Cairo

Dr. Kamal El-Ganzoury
Director-General

Dr. M. Mongi

Dr. Adde1 Fatah Nassef

University of Alexandria

Dr. M.M. El-Sawy
Chairman
Department of Tropical Public Health
High Institute of Public Health

(x)

University of Alexandria (cont'd)

Dr. K. Shazly
Dean
Faculty of Agriculture

Dr. A. Eltabie
Head, Department of Food Science
Faculty of Agriculture

Professor Nabila Bakry
Department of Plant Protection

Dr. Mohamed El Halfawi
Soil Department

Professor A.M. Nour
Department of Animal Production

Ford Foundation

Richard Robarts
Deputy Regional Representative

Population Council

Dr. Fred Shorter
Regional Representative

International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and Research -
Al Azhar University

Dr. Fouad Hefnawi
Director

Dr. Wajihuddin Ahmed
UNFPA Project Advisor

UNESCO Educational Planning Centre

Dr. M. El-Ghannem
Director

American University in Cairo -
(Social Research Center)

Dr. Sawsan El-Messiri

Dr. Nawal Nadim

Academy of Scientific Research and Technology

Dr. Ahmed Gamal Abdel-Samie
Vice-President

KENYA

David Mwiraria
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Power and Communications

Brian Meadows
Head of Water Quality & Pollution
Ministry of Water Development

Leonard Kibinge
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Livestock Production

Dr. Dan Thairu
FAD/UNDP
Drylands Project
Katunani Research Station

Dr. Chris Wood
African Medical Research and Education Foundation

University of Nairobi

Professor M. Mungai
Vice-Chancellor

Professor M. Hyder
Department of Zoology
Faculty of Agriculture

University of Nairobi (cont'd)

K. Kuria
Department of Zoology
Faculty of Agriculture

Dr. M. Gomez
Department of Animal Production
Faculty of Agriculture

Moses Onim
Department of Crop Science
Faculty of Agriculture

Dr. D. Ngugi
Faculty of Agriculture

Katherine Namuddy
Ugandan displaced scholar

Veterinary Research Laboratory - Kabete, Kenya

Dr. Sam Chema
Director of Research

Dr. Jan Grootenhuis
IDRC Project Advisor

Diseases Program:

Reardon Olubayo
Joe Kinyili
Peter Ngogoyo
Gerald Mucheme

Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI)

Dr. Walter Masiga
Director

Dr. George Losos

Ford Foundation

John Gerhart
Agricultural Advisor

World Bank

R. Dewar
Regional Officer

Van Keolen
Agricultural Consultant

Rockefeller Foundation

David Court
Representative

Canadian High Commission

John Copland
Counsellor (Development)

UNEP

Michael Gwynne

Mr. Cruise

MAY 6 1985

DEC 14 1988

CIRC Appropriate IDRC policies
341.1 IDRC S 5



c.1

40569

120679