

IDRC in Sudan

IDRC began to support research in Sudan in 1974. By the late 1980s, however, conditions for research had deteriorated as civil war pitted rebels in the South against government forces. IDRC-supported activities in the country became sporadic until the country emerged from this 21-year conflict with a comprehensive peace accord, signed in January 2005. While the government and Southern rebels inched closer to peace, fighting broke out in 2003 in the western region, Darfur, between rebels seeking greater autonomy, Arab militia, and government troops.

IDRC is supporting several activities related to past and ongoing conflicts in Sudan. For example, the Kenyan non-governmental organization (NGO), African Research and Resource Forum recently brought decision-makers together to advise the new government of the autonomous region of Southern Sudan on building a new post-conflict society.

As well, in December 2005, IDRC staff assisted efforts to integrate women's perspective in the 7th round of the Inter-Sudanese Talks on the Conflict in Darfur, sponsored by the African Union. At the invitation of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), IDRC staff consulted with stakeholders

in the negotiations, held in Abuja, Nigeria, and made recommendations on integrating gender equity into the process. With co-funding from DFAIT and in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, IDRC is acting on some of these recommendations through a program to bolster advocacy among negotiators for issues such as women's personal safety and access to education.

Some regional IDRC-supported research on the root causes and drivers of conflict is highly relevant to Sudan. Both Uganda and Sudan are the focus of Tufts University's effort to study armed conflict from the perspective of different generations and genders, shedding light on such problems as the reintegration of children who were abducted to become soldiers. Sudan is also one of six countries in which an IDRC partner — the Tanzanian NGO, Concern for Development Initiatives in Africa — is researching the interests that fuel protracted conflicts and can lead certain actors to block peace processes. Also of significance to Sudan is an IDRC-supported study on the lessons from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission model in Africa. The NGO, Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa, is studying the work of such commissions in South Africa, Ghana, and Sierra Leone.

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As part of the broader peacebuilding process, York University, of Toronto, is leading an IDRC-supported effort with Sudanese partners to develop sustainable livelihoods and grassroots entrepreneurship in Southern Sudan and Darfur.

Private sector development is also the focus of a regional study. Having supported a research and training effort to improve the policy environment for micro, small and medium enterprises in Egypt, IDRC is assessing the possibility of backing similar initiatives elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa.

Another exploration involves the local information and communication technology (ICT) centres (telecentres) in 11 countries in the region. The study, funded by Microsoft Corporation, is identifying each country's telecentre players and the challenges they face. It will generate information needed for the global telecentre program, telecentre.org — supported by IDRC, Microsoft, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation — to begin programming in the region.

Equitable access to services and good governance under Sudan's federal system are the focus of an IDRC grant recipient, the Gender Centre for Research and Training, based in Khartoum. This NGO was one of five winners in the 2003 IDRC research competition on Decentralization and Women's Rights in sub-Saharan Africa.

Research supported at the end of the 1990s provided information and national platforms for open dialogue on issues such as the reintegration of former guerillas and soldiers, small arms control, and disarmament. The Canadian Council of Churches led this research, which has helped speed up government and civil society action on these fronts in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Southern Sudan. It strengthened their analysis of military roles, arms control, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution.

Past IDRC support for research on health in the 1980s and early 1990s included the Sudanese Ministry of Health's efforts to design a model for rural maternity care services that could be expanded to other areas of the country. Other grants enabled government agencies to identify needs in mental health and primary health care in areas with large influxes of refugees from Ethiopia, Chad, and Uganda.

IDRC-supported research from 1977 to 1995 tested ways to revive oyster farming on the coastline of the Red Sea and made local fishers and government decision-makers aware of the potential of oyster cultivation. Both Sudan's Agricultural Research Corporation and its Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources were involved in the oyster culture research, as well as in IDRC-supported research to increase yields and focus greater attention on food legumes and oilseed crops such as groundnuts, sesame, and soybeans in the 1980s.

The first IDRC-supported research activity, in 1974, established tree shelterbelts to test their ability to protect land and agricultural crops from dry winds and desert creep. IDRC has since contributed over CA\$8 million toward 54 projects in or involving Sudan. Seven active projects, some of which are regional in scope, represent an allocation of approximately CA\$1million.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Post-conflict Construction in Southern Sudan

The comprehensive peace agreement that brought an end to civil war in Sudan created the Government of Southern Sudan and the Southern Sudanese Legislative Assembly. While maintaining links to the central government in Khartoum, the new government and people of Southern Sudan now face the challenge of constructing a peaceful and prosperous society. They not only need to build roads, electrical power sys-

tems, schools and hospitals, but also to develop a self-sustaining political and economic regime.

An IDRC grant enabled the African Research and Resource Forum (ARRF) to convene a workshop in Juba in November 2006 to discuss nation building in the post-conflict situation. Some 50 policymakers, academics, and professionals from Southern Sudan and the Southern Sudanese diaspora, as well as other regional actors, reviewed progress in implementing the comprehensive peace agreement and made policy recommendations on the development of a basic socio-economic structure in Southern Sudan. ARRF will publish the workshop proceedings.

(Project #104137; Post-conflict Construction of a New Society in South Sudan; Duration: 2006–2007; IDRC allocation: CA\$30 000; IDRC contact: Njeri Karuru; Research partner: George Omondi, African Research and Resources Forum, Hse No. 305, Mountainview Estate, PO Box 57103-00200, Nairobi, Kenya; Tel.: 254-20-630-457; Email: pan@africaonline.co.ke)

Women in the Darfur Peace Talks

The Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on the Conflict in Darfur have been underway in Abuja, Nigeria, since 2004. By November 2005 all parties had included women in official negotiating delegations and preparatory workshops. However, discussion on the security needs of women and girls — defined as access to education, health services, economic activity, return to farmland, and personal safety — remained limited.

At the request of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, IDRC developed recommendations aimed at integrating a gender perspective in the negotiations and strengthening women's participation in the peace process. This project pursued some of these recommendations. IDRC supported the capacity-building efforts of the senior gender advisor to the African Union Mission in Sudan, as well as the Gender Expert Support Team. The team, made up of five Darfuri women, is sup-

porting women delegates who advocate for the inclusion of gender equality provisions in the peace agreements. IDRC also commissioned policy relevant research to inform the work of the peace talks' three technical commissions on power- and wealth sharing, and security arrangements. The United Nations Development Fund for Women is carrying out a parallel effort aimed at integrating women's perspective in the peace talks.

(Project # 103625; Engendering the Inter-Sudanese Peace talks on the Conflict in Darfur; Duration: 2006; IDRC allocation CA\$20 000; IDRC contact: Njeri Karuru; Email: nkaruru@idrc.or.ke.)

Grassroots Enterprises and Livelihoods

Peacekeeping efforts in Darfur and the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the North and the South require complementary initiatives that build a post-conflict future in Sudan. Capacity for local economic development is one of the key conditions needed to move beyond conflict.

IDRC partner York University is collaborating with a consortium of international organizations, international and Sudanese universities, civil society organizations, and government departments to generate specific proposals for grassroots entrepreneurship initiatives and sustainable livelihoods in Darfur and Southern Sudan. These proposals are developed using participatory research involving the poor in the search for mechanisms that will advance self-reliance in the fields of agriculture, health, education, market trading, water and sanitation, and natural resource management.

(Project # 103332; Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods and Grassroots Enterprise Development in Darfur and Southern Sudan; Duration: 2005–2007; IDRC allocation: CA\$70 000; IDRC contact: Danièle St-Pierre; Research partner: David Wheeler, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M3J 1P3; Tel.: 416-736-5784; Email: dwheeler@yorku.ca)

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Decentralization and Women's Rights

Decentralization reforms are widespread in Africa. They aim to improve service delivery and give citizens more opportunity to participate in, influence, and monitor decision-making and resource allocation. In the case of Sudan, the federal system, initiated in 1994, gives the country's 26 states the sole responsibility for providing resources for education, health, infrastructure, water, and sanitation services.

The Gender Centre for Research and Training is analyzing whether the present system is contributing to the deterioration in people's access to health, education, and natural resources and, in particular, the gender gap negatively affecting women and girls. With the help of research assistants and data collectors at the state and provincial levels, the research team is comparing men's and boys' access to services with that of women and girls. It is identifying why discrimination against women in access to services and natural resources exists and what specific modes of service delivery under decentralization are more effective than others. The researchers aim to bring evidence on current decentralization to bear on discussions of governance taking place in the ongoing peace processes.

(Project # 102076: Research Competition: Decentralization and Women's Rights (Sub-Saharan Africa); Duration: 2004–2006; IDRC allocation to Sudan: CA\$100 000; IDRC contact: Claudie Gosselin; Research partner: Asha Elkarib, Gender Center for Research and Training, PO Box 3752, Khartoum, Sudan; Tel: 249-11-474-588; Email: ashaelkarib@hotmail.com)

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