

# IDRC in Zambia

**I**DRC began supporting research related to health in Zambia in the 1970s and continues to focus on this area to this day. The first efforts helped improve treatments for common communicable and parasitic diseases. More recent initiatives involve primary health-care research.

In recent years, declining resources for health and a growing disease burden, especially from HIV/AIDS and malaria, have led to a worsening health profile. IDRC is supporting efforts to redress this situation. For example, IDRC-supported research is analyzing private health-care's approach to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in Zambia, as well as in Botswana and Namibia. The aim is to encourage treatment collaboration between public and private health services. Another IDRC-supported effort seeks to bolster community input into the health system, in keeping with the Zambian government's health reform, which emphasizes public participation. A Zambian non-governmental organization (NGO) is using a small IDRC grant to test the use of video and voice recording as a way of communicating to health workers and managers the very different perceptions communities have of health system inequities.

In the 1990s, IDRC supported two research initiatives related to HIV/AIDS and its effects on the population. One, which addressed the problem of STDs and HIV/AIDS among South

African refugees, involved the health department of the African National Congress while it was still in exile. Another activity led to the introduction of one of the first low-cost blood-screening techniques, the "HIV dipstick." The test was simple enough to be used outside well-equipped clinical laboratories and accurate enough to screen for HIV infection in blood-donor clinics, diagnose patients, and conduct epidemiological surveillance. IDRC support allowed the NGO PATH Canada to team up with an umbrella organization of church-associated health institutions in Zambia to help train lab technicians in three rural Zambian hospitals to use the dipstick. The success of this project led to all rural hospitals in Zambia adopting the HIV dipstick for general use. The technology was subsequently transferred to more than 20 other developing countries.

Zambian researchers are currently participating in two IDRC-supported regional networks on information and communication technologies (ICTs) use. One focuses on ICT policy research and the other on research to encourage greater ICT use to improve women's lives. These networks will help to harness ICTs' potential to foster development and alleviate poverty.

IDRC also supports regional initiatives that promote economic development, such as the Coordinating Secretariat for the Zambia–Malawi–Mozambique Growth Triangle, based in Lusaka. The Secretariat is strengthening its policy and

## IDRC in Zambia

research capacity and producing several reports on investment opportunities and barriers to trade in this border region.

Since 1978, IDRC has contributed CA\$6.8 million to 34 research activities involving Zambia, some of which were regional in scope. There are currently five active projects in or involving Zambia, worth CA\$2.5 million.

### RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

#### Using Video and Voice for Health Promotion

The Zambian health-care system faces severe funding constraints and the government has adopted a health reform program that emphasizes public participation. Since 2001, the non-governmental Centre for Health Science and Social Research (CHESSORE) has undertaken to make operational and relevant the concept of community participation for attaining equity in health services. It mobilized and brought together local and national stakeholders — health-care users and workers, as well as journalists — to discuss the concept of equity.

Stakeholders were encouraged to express their perception of inequity through songs, drama, poems, and religious sermons. Through this approach, communities were able to convey everyday experiences of inequity. To date, the impact of this work has been limited because it is difficult to disseminate these activities. The use of audiovisual services appears to provide a solution. This grant allows CHESSORE to test the usefulness of audiovisual (video-voice) recordings of meetings, workshops, and other public health activities to promote and enhance discussion between community members and health-care workers over issues of equity in health and health-care practices. CHESSORE is working with video teams in four Zambian districts to develop their audiovisual technical capacity.

(Project # 103244, Video-Voice Project (Zambia); Duration: 2006–2007; IDRC allocation: CA\$25 000; IDRC contact: Kevin Kelpin; Research partner: T.J. Ngulube, Centre for Health Science and Social Research (CHESSORE), 6th Floor, Tazara House, Independence Avenue, Kamwala, Lusaka, Zambia; Tel./Fax: 260-1-228359; Email: chessore@zamnet.zm)

#### Private Health Care and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa have relatively well-established public control programs for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and substantial private primary health services. They also have high HIV prevalence rates and a need for enhanced STD control interventions.

The Health Systems Planning and Development Trust of Durban, South Africa, is using an IDRC grant to assess the delivery, quality, and control of STD treatment by the private health-care sector in Botswana, Zambia, and Namibia. A similar analysis has already been carried out in South Africa. The research involves interviews with key informants and stakeholders, both providers and clients, and an evaluation of a sample of private-sector providers.

Researchers expect to identify interventions for improved care and develop a management framework to address STD treatment by the private sector, as well as models for partnerships between the private and public sectors.

(Project # 101939, Private Health Care and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Southern Africa; Duration: 2004–2007; IDRC allocation: CA\$224 890; IDRC contact: Marie-Claude Martin; Research partner: Rita Sonko; Recipient institution: Health Systems Planning and Development Trust, 410 Maritime House, PO Box 808 Durban, Salmon Grove, Durban, South Africa, 4000; Tel.: 031 307 2954; Fax: 031-307-0775; Email: rita@hst.org.za; Website: www.hst.org.za)

## How African Women use ICTs for Empowerment

How do women in Africa use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve their lives? What barriers prevent them from doing so, and how are they surmounting them? Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment (GRACE) is answering these kinds of questions, while building a self-sustaining African gender and ICT research network.

Managed by the Women's Networking Programme of the Association for Progressive Communications, GRACE is providing intensive training and ongoing support to 15 research teams from 12 countries, including Zambia. By funding country-specific studies, it is building a more substantial body of research on how African women access and use ICTs. The findings may guide policies and help to reduce the obstacles women currently encounter. Research in Zambia is focusing on the use of cell phones and their contribution to women's independence and empowerment.

In addition to investigating how African women use ICTs for their own empowerment, the project is seeking to understand the concepts of "gender" and "empowerment" in Africa. The project is expected to generate country-specific recommendations, which will be shared with policymakers and educators, and will help establish a network of gender and ICT researchers in Africa.

(Project # 102508, Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment, Phase II; Duration: 2005–2007; IDRC allocation: CA\$1 458 480; IDRC contact: Heloise Emdon; Research partner: Chat Garcia Ramilo, Association for Progressive Communications, PO Box 29755, Melville 2109, South Africa; Tel./Fax: 27- 11- 726 1692; Email: chat@apcwomen.org; Zambia research coordinator: Sara Hlupekile Longwe; Email: longwe5000@yahoo.com)

## Investing in the Zambia–Malawi–Mozambique Growth Triangle

The Zambia–Malawi–Mozambique Growth Triangle (ZMM-GT) was launched in 1999 by the respective national governments and a number of dynamic private sector operators. The three countries are among the poorest in the southern African region, but unlike many other border areas in Africa, the zone holds growth potential and investment opportunities in sectors such as tourism, mining, manufacturing, information technology, agroprocessing, and fisheries. The ZMM-GT's goal is rapid and broad-based economic growth leading to poverty alleviation and socially acceptable and sustainable development. It is aiming to increase small-holder incomes and create employment by facilitating linkages and networking among small and large producers to take advantage of expanded market opportunities.

This small IDRC grant is allowing the Zambia Investment Centre (ZIC), acting as the Coordinating Secretariat of the ZMM-GT, to gather information from primary and secondary sources to assist in developing the region. The process will increase the Secretariat's in-house policy and research capacity by strengthening its ability to organize and manage research related to the subregion's economic integration. The ZIC plans to publish a report on investment and commercial opportunities that will serve as a guide for potential investors, both foreign and domestic, and will produce a report on barriers to cross-border trade. The reports will also provide input to policy reforms needed to advance the objectives of the ZMM-GT.

(Project # 102809, Investment and Commercial Opportunities in the Zambia-Malawi-Mozambique Growth Triangle (ZMM-GT); Duration: 2004–2006; IDRC allocation: CA\$20 000; IDRC contact: Basil Jones; Research partner: Zambia Investment Centre, 6457 Los Angeles Boulevard, PO Box 34580, Lusaka, Zambia; Tel.: 2601 254214; Fax: 2601 252150; Email: [kojo@zic.org.zm](mailto:kojo@zic.org.zm); Website: [www.zic.org.zm](http://www.zic.org.zm))

## IDRC in Zambia

### Using Water as an Entry Point for Agricultural Markets

Many constraints prevent smallholder farmers from participating fully in markets, including limited access to water, agricultural inputs, credit, and information. Water, in particular, is critical in helping smallholders escape cycles of poverty and sickness. Irrigation, for example, helps increase agricultural production, while clean drinking water helps keep family members healthy and productive.

The US-based non-profit organization, International Development Enterprise (IDE), links smallholders to integrated and expanding agricultural markets by improving their access to water. This IDRC grant is allowing IDE to document and refine this model, which uses micro-irrigation technology — specifically a foot-treadle pump — to promote sustainable land and water use and enable the rural poor to take part in markets. IDE is working with local researchers in Zambia to test, validate, and

document the model and is conducting two other studies to assess needs and opportunities for its wider application in two other regions: the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

(Project # 101781, Smallholder Market Integration in Africa; Duration 2003–2007; IDRC allocation: CA\$750 000; IDRC contact: Luis Navarro; Research partners: Fritz Kramer and Peter Elkind, International Development Enterprises-Stiftung, 10403 West Colfax, Suite 500, Lakewood, CO 80215, USA; Tel: 303-232-4336; Fax: 303-232-8346; Email: [info@ideorg.org](mailto:info@ideorg.org); Website: [www.ideorg.org](http://www.ideorg.org))

#### **For more information, please contact IDRC's Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa:**

Postal address: PO Box 62084, 00200, Nairobi, Kenya  
Street address: Liaison House, 2nd floor, State House Avenue  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel.: 254-20-271-3160/61  
Fax: 254-20-271-1063  
Email: [postperson@idrc.or.ke](mailto:postperson@idrc.or.ke)  
Website: [www.idrc.ca/esaro](http://www.idrc.ca/esaro)

September 2006

WWW.IDRC.CA

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is one of the world's leading institutions in the generation and application of new knowledge to meet the challenges of international development. For more than 35 years, IDRC has worked in close collaboration with researchers from the developing world in their search for the means to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies.

#### **International Development Research Centre**

PO Box 8500, Ottawa, ON, Canada K1G 3H9  
Tel.: 613-236-6163  
Fax: 613-238-7230  
Email: [info@idrc.ca](mailto:info@idrc.ca)