

From the Director, May 2018

People the world over celebrated International Women’s Day in March. This Africa edition of the newsletter of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) continues the focus on women. You will read about the need for career mentoring of women, women’s economic empowerment, and involving men and boys in the journey.

Such work is part of IDRC’s contribution to Canada’s [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#) (FIAP), which recognizes that supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the best way to build a more peaceful, more inclusive and more prosperous world. Enjoy the read, and let us hear from you.

Dr. Kathryn Toure
Regional Director, Regional Office for sub-Saharan Africa

Women’s empowerment



Promoting gender equality worldwide

People rally around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. This requires understanding and promoting the unique needs, knowledge, and aspirations of women and girls. Here’s [what empowering women looks like](#) at IDRC.



Women are fattening their sheep — and their income

“We knew that sheep ate tree fodder, but what we didn’t know was that they could gain so much weight in such a short time by being fed leaves from certain trees.” Thanks to this new knowledge generated in collaboration with Institut d’économie rurale, Université Laval, and Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée de Katibougou, women in a rural community in Mali are reaping financial and nutritional gain. [Find out more.](#)



Golden girls: Women in Africa’s artisanal mines

Small-scale and artisanal mining is perceived as male-dominated. In reality, however, women engage in a range of activities related to the sector to earn an income to support themselves and their families. In so doing they face a lot of challenges. How can mining be improved as an option for women? What are their rewards and sacrifices in this industry? [Read Nakacho’s story.](#)



Strategizing for Gender Equality in West Africa

While on a recent trip to Ouagadougou, IDRC Regional Director Kathryn Toure met with Barbara Ky (see photo), the Gender Director of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, to learn about the Union’s draft gender strategy. The strategy advocates gender equity and institutionalisation of gender equality and is due to be submitted to West African heads of state this year for consideration for approval.



We cannot leave men and boys behind!

Canada’s High Commissioner to Kenya joined IDRC staff in Nairobi to recognize change-makers on International Women’s Day (IWD). The following received an award for bettering the lives of women: IDRC colleague Jemimah Njuki, CARE’s Maureen Miruka, and the Akili Dada organisation. In early April, IDRC staff hosted, mentored and were inspired by 46 Akili Dada Young

Changemaker Scholars. The energetic high school students asked questions about career opportunities and pathways.

In a pre-IWD event on 1 March, panelists from four continents launched discussions on the rationale for investing in women-owned businesses. They noted that female entrepreneurs are the world’s next emerging market, yet the policy environment to support them is wanting. A theme running through both IWD2018 events: men and boys are crucial partners in the journey to women’s empowerment, gender equity, and more robust and resilient communities.



A woman empowered!

Meet Dr. Zeinab Kane who is a lawyer, lecturer and researcher from Université Alioune Diop de Bambey in Senegal. She is part of a multidisciplinary team of researchers coordinated by Dr. Fatou Diop Sall from Université Gaston Berger in Senegal. They work with researchers from Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d’Ivoire, looking into the

underlying reasons for disparities in the effectiveness of programs that fight childhood marriages in urban and rural areas in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. Zeinab is one of the many empowered women on the Continent contributing to the empowerment of girls and other women. Here's [more on Zeinab's project](#).

Women's economic empowerment!

The Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women ([GrOW](#)) program jointly funded by IDRC, the Hewlett Foundation and UK's Department for International Development, has found that women's empowerment manifests differently in different contexts. The program studied the links between women's economic empowerment and economic growth in 50 countries. For example, did you know that access to affordable childcare increases women's economic participation? Follow the GrOW twitter handle [@GrOW4Women](#) for more exciting results from the research.

Strengthening health systems for all



A community approach for improving maternal health

Mozambique's maternal mortality ratio is high at 490 per 100,000 live births according to the World Health Organization. Poor knowledge about healthy pregnancies and family planning, lack of transportation and poor services at health facilities are among the challenges that contribute to this state of affairs. Community members in Nampula Province have teamed up with researchers, traditional medical practitioners, nongovernmental organizations, and the provincial Ministry of Health to develop and test an innovative set of culturally acceptable and achievable interventions. [Find out more](#).

Studying deaths can save lives

"We all thought her pregnancy was safe," says the husband of 23-year-old Yeshimbet. "She looked fine." However, after she gave birth in their home to their son, the bleeding would not stop. She died the next day on the way to the health centre, many hours away on foot. Each death, such as Yeshimbet's, has an important story to tell. Information about what is killing mothers and children in Ethiopia is being translated into saved lives and wise use of public health money. [Find out more](#).

"It would have been better if I had never known": Why Swazi women avoid cancer screening

Swaziland has one of the world's highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate. However, women fear cancer more. Someone with HIV can live a long and hopeful life thanks to widely available counselling and free antiretroviral treatment. Cancer on the other hand seems incurable because treatment is inaccessible and expensive. [Learn more](#).

Africa events



Largest science gathering in Africa, #NEF2018

The Next Einstein Forum brought 1600 people together in Kigali in March to discuss the future of science in Africa. Over 40% of the participants were female, with 50% of all participants being under 42 years of age. Various panelists stressed the need for men and women to mentor women to go into and advance their careers in science. Kathryn Toure, IDRC Regional Director in Nairobi, moderated the panel on “Africa’s low carbon circular economy.” Naser Faruqi, IDRC’s Director of Technology and Innovation, moderated the panel on “Leveraging artificial intelligence to improve health outcomes.”



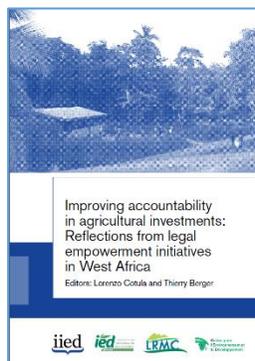
IDRC also supported and participated in three pre-NEF events: the 14th [Gender Summit](#) 2018; InterSol2018 [climate change workshop](#) with the Rwanda Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Dr. Gerardine Mukeshimana (left), and young climate change scientists from across the continent; and the [Science Africa](#) workshop.



#AfricaEvidence

How does evidence support policymaking in Africa? Junior and senior researchers, civil society actors, policymakers, businessmen and businesswomen, and donors gathered in Nairobi in March to discuss this question, share lessons, and discuss strategies for the future. The [Think Tank Initiative](#) and the MasterCard Foundation convened the two-day Forum. Read more about [supporting evidence-informed policy processes](#) that promote sustainable development.

Publication



Improving accountability in agricultural investments: Reflections from legal empowerment initiatives in West Africa

Pressures on land in many low- and middle-income countries are increasing in part due to surges in agribusiness plantation deals. Rural people have mobilised to protect their rights, seek better terms or oppose the deals altogether. This report summarises insights from first-hand experiences of [rural people in Cameroon, Ghana and Senegal exercising their land rights](#) and, ultimately, claiming their future.

Grants and careers

Visit our [Grants](#) page for the latest on IDRC competitive calls, including research awards. Our [Careers](#) page has all the latest information on current job openings at the Centre.

The Africa Climate Change Leadership Program - Policy Track – call for applications by the University of Nairobi in partnership with the Institute of Resource Assessment (IRA) at the University of Dar es Salaam. To apply visit <http://apply.africlp.or.ke/>. Deadline for submission: 18th May.

The Hewlett Foundation call for proposals for [African Policy Research Institutions to Advance Government Use of Evidence](#). Deadline for submission of proposals is June 15th.

Contact us

International Development Research Centre
Regional Office for Sub-Saharan Africa, Eaton Place, 3rd Floor, United Nations Crescent, Gigiri,
Nairobi
PO Box 62084-00200, Nairobi, Kenya, Tel. +254 709 074 000

Questions or comments? Email us at rossa@idrc.ca
[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Connect with us:



CENTRE DE RECHERCHES POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT INTERNATIONAL

Canada