IDRC has supported research in Egypt since 1971 and opened its Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa in Cairo in 1976. Early research investments led to improvements in such areas as irrigation, pest control, food processing, water conservation and treatment, and healthcare services.

Following the recent uprisings that have swept many Arab countries, IDRC identified several targeted interventions to support the transitions to democracy in the region. One example is the work of the Arab Reform Initiative, a network of research centres that is developing and testing reforms. With a newly opened office in Egypt, the network is helping the country’s emerging actors — such as citizens’ groups and political parties — to participate in policy dialogues. Several grants also build on women’s rights and political empowerment in the region’s transitions.

Cutting red tape for business

IDRC-supported research from 2000 to 2009 informed Egyptian policymakers about international trade negotiations and reforms to encourage the growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. For eight years, IDRC and the former Canadian International Development Agency supported training for public servants and government efforts to increase competitiveness. The reforms cut red tape in areas such as customs and income tax: 3,000 small business owners also learned how to use information and communication technologies more effectively.

Nile Delta at risk

Rising sea levels are putting economic activity and populations along the Nile Delta at risk of flooding and salt water intrusion. In 2008, IDRC funding enabled the University of Alexandria to assess the vulnerability of different economic sectors and advise on adaptation options, such as building sea walls and retreating from low-lying areas. With support from IDRC and the Government of Canada Fast-Track Financing under the Copenhagen Accord, the university established the Alexandria Research Centre for Adaptation to Climate Change. This centre of excellence will help to guide the country’s investment in adaptation.

Total support

215 activities
CA$36.6 million
since 1971

Our support helps
- Egyptians foster their entrepreneurial culture
- Women engage in political and economic life
- Communities adapt to climate change
- Innovators collaborate for development
- Women map incidents of sexual harassment
Research is helping Egyptians adapt to climate change.

Some recent activities

In Egypt, IDRC-supported research focuses on job creation, shaping climate change adaptation, enhancing women’s safety and political participation, and testing the power of social media to address sexual harassment.

- **Job creation after the Arab Spring**
  - **Funding:** $112,400
  - **Duration:** 2012–2013
  - **Grantee:** Silatech, Qatar
  
  Jobs and the ability to create businesses were important concerns for Arab Spring demonstrators. Egyptian and Tunisian teams are collecting data to track the changes that have since occurred in their countries’ entrepreneurial activity, thanks to new attitudes and programs. Their research will help policymakers improve job-creation policies, especially for youth and women.

- **Young women’s political participation**
  - **Funding:** $161,600
  - **Duration:** 2011–2013
  - **Grantee:** American University in Cairo, Egypt
  
  Women in Egypt face formidable barriers to political participation. Researchers are exploring areas of engagement that young women consider important, and how they see politics as relevant to their daily lives. They will pinpoint the factors that limit women’s participation in politics, the judiciary, and the public sector, and identify new networks being forged by young women.

- **Adapting to sea level rise**
  - **Funding:** $1,296,200
  - **Other donor:** Government of Canada
  - **Duration:** 2011–2014
  - **Grantee:** Alexandria University, Egypt
  
  The Nile Delta is highly vulnerable to rising sea levels. The Alexandria Research Centre for Adaptation to Climate Change (ARCA) is analyzing the area’s options for adapting to this global warming effect. Through scholarships, training, and mentorship, ARCA is building essential skills and knowledge for government, businesses, and households to understand the economic impacts of adaptation. The Centre is focusing in particular on agriculture, inland fisheries, and the salinity of building foundations in Alexandria.

- **Mapping sexual harassment**
  - **Funding:** $361,000
  - **Duration:** 2011–2013
  - **Grantee:** Youth and Development Consultancy Institute, Egypt
  
  Sexual harassment is a daily reality for women across Egypt. The innovative social media site HarassMap.org allows users to report and map incidents of assault. Using HarassMap as a case study, researchers are testing the quality of data gathered through crowdsourcing as a way of documenting sensitive issues in developing countries.

For more information visit the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa website: [www.idrc.ca/cairo](http://www.idrc.ca/cairo)
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About Canada’s International Development Research Centre

A key part of Canada’s foreign policy efforts, IDRC supports research in developing countries to promote growth and development. The result is innovative, lasting solutions that aim to improve lives and livelihoods.

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