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 pest control, irrigation, 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 centers 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 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) 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.

**Water management in the oasis**

Also in the previous decade, regional research on water helped people in the Farafra Oasis in Egypt’s Western Desert deal with chronic water shortages. With support from IDRC, CIDA, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, researchers and community members assessed traditional and modern approaches to water management. Community leaders emerged to take charge of comprehensive water plans that will help the area develop.

**Total support**

- **206 activities**
- **CA$32.7 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

Ahmed Galal, Managing Director of the Economic Research Forum in Cairo, is a member of IDRC’s Board of Governors.
Research is helping Egyptians adapt to climate change.

Some current 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 throughout the region improve job-creation policies, especially for youth and women.

- **Adapting to climate change**
  Funding: $1,296,200  
  Duration: 2011–2014  
  Grantee: Alexandria University, Egypt  
  The Nile Delta is highly vulnerable to rising sea levels and other climate change impacts. The Alexandria Research Centre for Adaptation to Climate Change (ARCA) is one of seven supported by the African Adaptation Research Centres initiative. Through scholarships, training, and mentorship, ARCA is building essential skills and knowledge for adaptation.

- **IP and open development**
  Funding: $2,043,600  
  Duration: 2010–2013  
  Grantee: University of Cape Town, South Africa  
  Open A.I.R. (African Innovation Research and Training), a network of African and international researchers, is exploring how copyright, patents, and trademarks can facilitate innovation or dampen it by barring access to knowledge. Through case studies in publishing, bioenergy, and agriculture, they are shedding light on the right mix of intellectual property policies to foster creativity and development in Africa. The North African research node is hosted at the Access to Knowledge for Development Center at the American University in Cairo.

- **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. Subscribe to the IDRC Bulletin: www.idrc.ca/idrcbulletin/