

# IDRC in Ghana

For nearly four decades, IDRC's support for research in Ghana has helped build strong links between Ghana and Canada. In 2001, IDRC awarded a fellowship to John Atta Mills, who became president of Ghana in 2009. From his base at the University of British Columbia, Mills travelled across Canada to talk to Canadians about the challenges facing Africa.

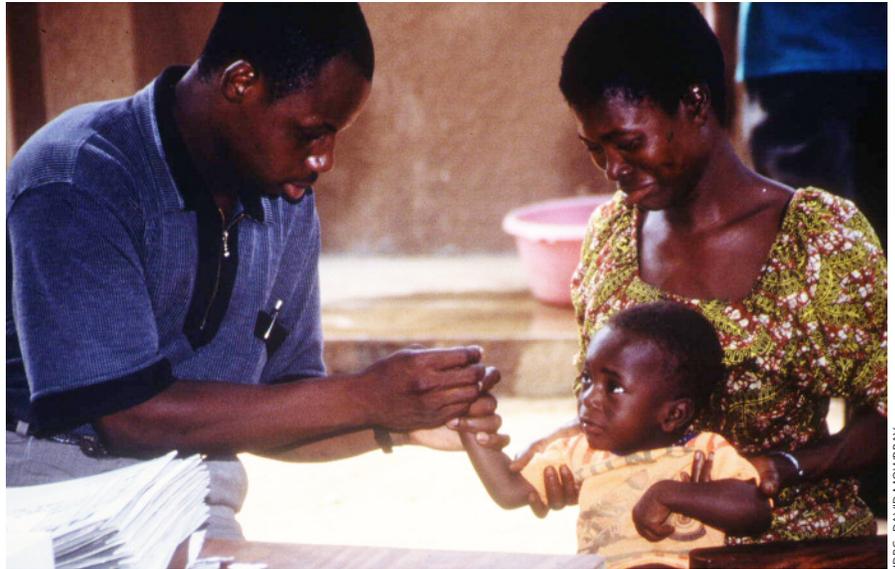
IDRC was also instrumental in setting up the Canada-Ghana Research and Science Council, in 2005. The Council links the scientific communities of the two countries.

## Reducing inequality

IDRC supported the efforts of the Ghana Health Service that led to a major reform in the country's national health insurance program. In 2006, the Ghanaian government extended health care to the aged, the poor, and children under the age of 18. It financed this extension through a monthly tax on adults who work in the informal sector of the economy.

The NGO BasicNeeds carried out research that raised awareness of the injustices the mentally ill suffer in Ghana. Its findings led to the creation of mutual assistance groups among the mentally ill. BasicNeeds also urged Ghanaian policymakers to provide better access to medications for the mentally ill and improve training for Ghana's mental health professionals.

IDRC-supported work has also helped spread the use of insecticide-coated mosquito nets throughout Africa. These nets are a key weapon in the battle against malaria.



IDRC: DAVID MOWBRAY

Major reform of the national health insurance program helped extend health care to the poor.

In addition, IDRC was instrumental in enlisting the support of Africa's traditional chiefs in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

## IT in the service of democracy

Researchers in Ghana recently undertook a unique experiment using information technology to enhance democracy. They set up a Web link between a poor region in northern Ghana and the country's Parliament.

This Internet site gives citizens access to bills currently before Parliament and makes it possible for them to communicate directly with their elected officials.

*IDRC Advisor: Takyiwaa Manuh, a professor at the University of Ghana, and a former director of its Institute of*

## Total IDRC support

**88** activities  
worth CA\$28 million  
since 1973

### IDRC support is helping:

- Children access more nutritious food
- Urban poor adapt to climate change
- Women assert their economic rights
- Policymakers understand new and changing health needs
- Researchers influence the policy process

*African Studies, is a member of IDRC's Council of Regional Advisors for West and Central Africa.*



The boundaries and names shown on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDRC.

**IDRC-supported research helps women assert their economic rights.**

### Some current activities

Here are some examples of IDRC-funded research in Ghana.

#### ■ Good nutrition for all of Ghana's children

**Funding:** \$712,600  
**Duration:** 2009–2014  
**Grantee:** University of Ghana

*Anna Lartey, a professor at the University of Ghana, is the IDRC Research Chair in Nutrition, Health and Socio-economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Together with Grace S. Marquis, Canada Research Chair in Social and Environmental Aspects of Nutrition at McGill University, Lartey has devised ways to improve the nutrition of children in HIV-affected households and to combat childhood obesity in urban areas.*

#### ■ Empowering slum dwellers

**Funding:** \$333,500  
**Other Donor:** Department for International Development, UK  
**Duration:** 2009–2012  
**Grantee:** Regional Institute of Population Studies, University of Ghana

*Flooding caused by climate change is affecting the already fragile health of the poor in Ghana's cities. Researchers are working with vulnerable communities and policymakers to*

*sensitize slum dwellers in Accra to the increased risk of infectious diseases. At the same time, researchers are helping poor communities develop their own strategies to deal with the effects of climate change.*

#### ■ Maintaining women's livelihoods

**Funding:** \$263,100  
**Duration:** 2008–2011  
**Grantee:** University of Ghana

*The University of Ghana is documenting the impact employment agencies have on the job security and incomes of domestic and bank workers. The research aims to provide useful data to women's rights advocates and to policymakers working on labour market issues.*

#### ■ Population data to improve health services

**Funding:** \$517,700  
**Duration:** 2009–2011  
**Grantee:** INDEPTH Network, Ghana

*Birth and death rates in Africa and Asia are declining. To better understand this trend, the Accra-based international network, INDEPTH, is gathering and analyzing population data in four poor countries, of which Ghana is one. Researchers will focus, in particular, on the causes of death. Their research will allow policymakers to provide more effective health services.*

#### Bolstering think tanks

*IDRC is strengthening the capacity of two independent policy research institutes in the country. The Think Tank Initiative awarded core funding to the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, at the University of Ghana, to modernize its facilities and train its staff. Funding for the Institute of Economic Affairs allowed it to recruit highly qualified professionals and, in that way, strengthen its research activities.*

*The Think Tank Initiative is supported by IDRC, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UK Department for International Development, and Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation.*

August 2010

**For more information** visit the Regional Office for West and Central Africa  
**website:** [www.idrc.ca/waro](http://www.idrc.ca/waro)  
 Subscribe to the IDRC Bulletin:  
[www.idrc.ca/idrcbulletin/](http://www.idrc.ca/idrcbulletin/)

### About Canada's International Development Research Centre

IDRC supports research in developing countries to promote growth and development. IDRC also encourages sharing this knowledge with policymakers, other researchers, and communities around the world. The result is innovative, lasting local solutions that aim to bring choice and change to those who need it most.

International Development Research Centre  
 PO Box 8500, Ottawa, ON, Canada K1G 3H9

[idrc.ca](http://idrc.ca)