

IDRC in the Caribbean

Since the early 1970s, IDRC has supported the efforts of researchers in the English-speaking Caribbean to reduce poverty and inequality, restore degraded coastal ecosystems, and protect communities against disease and natural disasters. Research has helped to improve farming and fishing practices and tackle education, housing, and gender-equity challenges.

IDRC-funded work focusing on trade and the economy has introduced technological advances to government and commerce. After IDRC support helped Jamaica automate its customs service, Jamaica donated its new software to neighbouring countries taking part in an IDRC-funded expansion of the modernization drive.

Other initiatives have been regional by design. For example, IDRC has helped to create the Caribbean Open Institute, which uses the concept of open data to promote innovation in agriculture, fisheries, and disaster preparedness. Other benefits include increased collaboration among governments, citizens, and the private sector, and improved efficiency and delivery of public services.

Rules to protect small economies

IDRC-supported research broke new ground with one of the first analyses of market competition and anti-competitive conduct in small states. Led by researchers at the University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago campus), the six-country study showed how monopoly abuses can damage small economies more than large ones. The researchers concluded that Caribbean



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Research has helped to restore degraded coastal ecosystems and improve fishing practices.

nations need to either adopt competition laws or reinforce existing ones to deal with companies that abuse their dominant market positions. In 2008, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) set up a Competition Commission aimed at protecting consumers from anti-competitive business practices.

A new regional think tank

IDRC-supported research led to the formation of the region's first think tank, based in Kingston, Jamaica. The Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CaPRI) grew out of an innovative study led by the University of the West Indies on Jamaica's economic potential. CaPRI is helping to ensure that research findings feed into the policymaking process as countries in the region grapple with economic, educational, health, and other challenges.

Total IDRC support

244 activities
CA\$34.5 million
since 1971

IDRC support is helping:

- Communities improve nutrition and food security
- Entrepreneurs create more jobs
- Island states adapt to worsening fresh water scarcity
- Educators develop human rights program
- Coastal regions respond to impacts of climate change



Researchers are working with farmers to boost food security and nutrition.



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

Some current activities

Here are some examples of IDRC-funded research in the Caribbean.

■ Improving nutrition and health

Funding: \$5 million

Duration: 2011-2014

Grantee: University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago) and McGill University, Canada

Obesity and poor nutrition are on the rise in the Caribbean. Local food production has been neglected in favour of export crops, and reliance on imported processed food contributes to high rates of chronic disease. Researchers are working with farmers to use land and water efficiently, and grow a wider variety of food crops. This, along with community nutrition education and an improved school lunch program, is testing a full farm-to-fork approach to boosting food security in the region.

■ Fostering entrepreneurship

Funding: \$864,000

Duration: 2011-2015

Grantee: Universidad del Instituto Colombiano de Estudios Superiores de Incoldea, Colombia

Most Caribbean countries face daunting development challenges, with high rates of crime and unemployment and an under-developed private sector. Researchers are examining how entrepreneurs can play a key

role in creating jobs and advancing economies in the region, and are identifying the policies needed to encourage this. Using an internationally recognized data-collection approach developed by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, they will assess why one country is more entrepreneurial than another and weigh the prospects for inclusive growth.

■ Protecting fresh water supplies

Funding: \$1.5 million

Duration: 2012-2015

Grantee: University of the West Indies (Barbados)

Climate change-induced drought and saline intrusion caused by sea-level rise put increasing pressure on fresh water supplies in the Caribbean. Researchers are studying the interaction between human activity and environmental change in watersheds in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and on Grenada's Carriacou Island. Their findings will be used to develop national water strategies adapted to projected climate-change scenarios.

■ Understanding poverty and human rights

Funding: \$115,000

Duration: 2013-2014

Grantees: University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago)

Poverty impedes access not only to basic needs such as food, housing, and health care, but also to civil and political rights such as the right to political participation. This initiative promotes

a deeper understanding within CARICOM of the links between human rights and development. It supports initial efforts by the University of the West Indies to develop a human rights teaching and training program.

■ Managing climate change impacts

Funding: \$2 million

Duration: 2009-2014

Grantee: University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago) and University of Ottawa, Canada

The rising sea levels and more frequent extreme weather events caused by climate change hit coastal communities and livelihoods hardest. This initiative brings together Canadian and Caribbean university researchers with grass-roots groups in the Caribbean and in Canada's Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic regions. This team is building the capacity of vulnerable communities to prepare for and manage the impacts of climate change.

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