IDRC has supported research in the West Bank and Gaza since 1984. Early research focused on agriculture, then expanded to include the effects of conflict, legal reform, environmental health hazards, water conservation, and economic policy.

Much of this research contributes knowledge that serves both local and international players working toward a durable peace. For example, researchers at Birzeit University in Ramallah recommended legal reforms that would integrate informal conflict resolution practices into the formal justice system and encourage a greater respect for the rule of law.

**Teenage stress and prolonged conflict**

In the West Bank, where adolescents make up nearly half the population, prolonged conflict and political violence have exacerbated normal teenage stress. Researchers from Birzeit University and Canada’s Queen’s University studied more than 3,000 15- to 17-year-olds in Ramallah to understand how they dealt with stress and trauma. The team then mentored Community Based Rehabilitation, a non-governmental organization, as it developed a community intervention approach now used in 34 locales across the West Bank and Gaza. This approach has produced significant benefits for youth and communities, and offers an alternative to the biomedical treatment of psychological trauma resulting from violent conflict.

**The public view on security**

In August 2009, the Palestinian authority committed to modernizing public security services in the West Bank and Gaza. In the months following that commitment, the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research saw a lack of consultation with the public as a major flaw in security reform. With funding from IDRC, researchers surveyed people in the Ministry of Interior, security services, the judiciary, parliament, and human rights organizations. Most importantly, they asked the general population whether the security sector meets the public’s needs and priorities.

The research is giving policymakers a way to monitor the evolution of the security sector and its performance. It provides a glimpse of how this sector helps or hinders Palestinians in their everyday lives.
Some recent activities

Here are some examples of IDRC-supported research in the West Bank and Gaza.

- **Meeting people’s need for security**
  - **Funding:** $733,800
  - **Duration:** 2013–2016
  - **Grantee:** Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, West Bank
  
  Research that began with IDRC support in 2010 continues to measure public perception of security services under the Palestinian Authority. The research is also expanding to include the perception of security institutions — such as the police, army and intelligence gathering agencies — in Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia, and Yemen. The results will help policymakers address the concerns of vulnerable groups such as women and children.

- **Helping small business create jobs**
  - **Funding:** $578,200
  - **Duration:** 2012–2014
  - **Grantee:** Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, West Bank
  
  The economy of the West Bank and Gaza is hampered by weak growth in the private sector. Five studies will identify how legislation, regulations, and the educational curriculum could improve the environment for small businesses led by or employing women and youth. Research findings will inform the work of a government commission on small and medium enterprises.

- **Understanding food production chains**
  - **Funding:** $323,400
  - **Duration:** 2013–2015
  - **Grantee:** Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem, West Bank
  
  With its arid environment and limited water for irrigation, the West Bank must make the best use of its agricultural resources. To ensure residents’ safe and secure access to food, researchers will generate basic data on local production and consumption. They will survey producers, consumers, distributors, and other stakeholders to identify crops with the highest potential for improving food security.

- **Harnessing knowledge to improve farming**
  - **Funding:** $95,000
  - **Other donor:** International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
  - **Duration:** 2009–2013
  - **Grantee:** The American Near East Refugee Aid, United States
  
  Rural poverty and food insecurity exist in part because knowledge about food production and enterprise development doesn’t reach farmers. IDRC and IFAD helped establish KariaNet (Knowledge Access for Rural Inter-connected Areas Network). KariaNet brings the most up-to-date knowledge to 370 farmers’ organizations, researchers, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations in nine countries and the West Bank and Gaza.

- **Getting the Arab world online**
  - **Funding:** $304,100 (Regional)
  - **Duration:** 2011–2014
  - **Grantee:** University of Oxford, United Kingdom
  
  Increasingly, popular sites such as Wikipedia shape our understanding of the world. But researchers have found that there are stark regional differences in who contributes to its content. The Wikipedia pages on the Arab world that do exist are more often than not written by contributors from non-Arab countries. These research findings, including an analysis of the cultural barriers to online content creation, are informing Wikipedia’s policies help create a more representative view of the world.

For more information visit the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa website: [www.idrc.ca/mero](http://www.idrc.ca/mero). Subscribe to the IDRC Bulletin: [www.idrc.ca/idrcbulletin/](http://www.idrc.ca/idrcbulletin/)