

ments. Funds for this program of collaborative research will be separate from the centre's regular budget, and will begin to flow in April 1981.

In preparation for this activity, a co-operative programs unit was established as part of the President's Office in August 1980, and a series of consultations was opened with Canada's research community. The fact that planning for the new program had begun was also made known to developing country institutions. Response from both quarters was encouragingly positive. Canadian researchers welcomed the opportunity to link their expertise with the needs of developing countries in research partnerships. Developing country institutions saw in the proposed new program an opportunity to give the North-South relationship a tangible new dimension.

#### Co-operative research funded

After careful review within the centre it was decided that part of the funds would be reserved for collaborative research within the areas of concentration of IDRC's four established program divisions; the rest of the funds would be used to support co-operative research programs in fields where Canada's research and development capacity matches developing country requirements.

As this program grows, and gives the centre a new set of development responsibilities, there will be no deviation from the principle of responsiveness to the needs of developing countries as defined by them. Every effort will also be made to ensure that the structure of co-operative relationships between the research communities of Canada and developing countries will strengthen the capabilities of the latter.

The need to build a stronger scientific research capability in the developing countries underlies all of the centre's activities. Indigenous research competence is gained by engaging in research. In addition, most centre-funded projects include provision for both formal and field training, particularly for the younger researchers, with a view to providing a core group capable of carrying on the work once the initial project is completed.

Beyond this it was felt there was a need to provide funding for promising individual researchers, even though they might not be directly associated with any centre-supported project. To meet this need the human resources program



*IDRC helps countries to develop the resources to participate in information programs.*

was established. Recently re-named the fellowships program, it has accounted for almost \$14 million during the past ten years, providing opportunities for scientists at all levels to acquire or upgrade their skills in the broad field of international development. In addition the centre contributes to a number of internationally funded scholarship programs, such as SEAPRAP — the Southeast Asia Population Research Awards Program.

#### Flexibility stressed

This same open approach is carried through at the administrative level too, where the basic philosophy is that the purpose of an administrative infrastructure is to support the research activity — not to police it. Subject to the basic premises of accountability, every effort is made to keep the administration of project funds as flexible as possible, always keeping in mind the difficulties facing many struggling research institutions in developing countries.

An example of this responsive style of administration was a workshop hosted by the centre's Asian regional office in 1979. Finance officers, co-ordinators and administrators from institutions receiving IDRC grants were invited to spend two days discussing project funding and airing their problems. The outcome was a booklet on project budgeting and administration that provides answers to many of the questions raised, and is now in wide use.

Although the centre's headquarters are in Ottawa, and all its programs operate from there, it was recognized very early that...a desk in Ottawa is not the ideal place from which to develop an effective program of research intended to benefit the least fortunate people of the Third

World. For this reason the centre established regional offices, both to provide a working base for some of its program staff and to ensure that the centre remains in close touch with those areas of the world it is attempting to serve.

By 1973 there were regional offices in Singapore, serving the Asian region; in Bogota, serving Latin America and the Caribbean; and in Dakar, serving West Africa. The following year a regional office for the Middle East and North Africa was opened in Beirut — shortly before the outbreak of hostilities there. The office was subsequently re-established in Cairo. In 1976 a fifth regional office was established in Nairobi, serving East and Central Africa. This office was temporarily closed in 1978 as a result of a government freeze on the centre's annual grant, but was re-opened in October 1980.

#### Regional directors

Most of the directors of the regional offices have been drawn from the region served by each office, and many of the professional staff are also recruited from the regions. In recent years the regional offices have been given increasing responsibilities, and in some cases a degree of autonomy that allows considerable freedom of action in many administrative and financial areas. Regional directors are also members of the centre's management group.

This decentralized structure not only enables the centre to have a closer working relationship with the governments, scientists and research institutions of the Third World, it also ensures that the needs and aspirations of the regions are always a factor in the decision-making process.