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Major funding announcement is made as Minister Bibeau and Parliamentary Secretary Gould visit IDRC projects in sub-Saharan Africa

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The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Canada's Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, announced major funding for an IDRC grantee during her August visit to West Africa. In Senegal, Minister Bibeau met with officials from the [African Institute for Mathematical Sciences – Next Einstein Initiative](#) (AIMS-NEI), a pan-African network of training centres enabling African students to become innovators driving scientific, educational, and economic self-sufficiency on the continent. After listening to stories from current students and alumni about the positive effects of the program, Minister Bibeau announced Canada's contribution of CA\$22.6 million over five years (IDRC will manage the CA\$19.6 million from Global Affairs Canada and CA\$3 million from IDRC, on behalf of the Government of Canada). The funding will be used to develop a specialized program in climate change at the AIMS-Rwanda centre and a climate change course option that will be available at all AIMS centres across Africa.

In line with her interest to put women and girls at the heart of Canada's international assistance programs, Minister Bibeau hosted a lunch for influential women in Senegal, attended by Oumoul Tandian, the principal investigator for the regional IDRC project "[Sexual abuse and access to justice for rural women in West Africa](#)". The group discussed the challenges facing women and girls in regards to health, rights, and education. In a separate meeting with the minister, IDRC Senior Program Specialist Ramata Thioune discussed the Centre's West Africa programming at length; Minister Bibeau was particularly interested in projects addressing sexual violence against women and combating early marriages for girls.

In Mali, representatives from IDRC grantee organizations [MISELI](#) and Institut d'économie rurale attended a dinner for Canada's partners hosted by Minister Bibeau at the embassy in Bamako.

In eastern Africa, Karina Gould, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, participated in a roundtable with Kenyan youth. Discussions focused on the results of an IDRC-funded survey conducted by Aga Khan East African Institute (EAI) to improve understanding of the values, attitudes, concerns, and aspirations of East African youth.

In Ethiopia, Gould was accompanied by the Canadian Ambassador and the embassy's development counselor on a visit to Mekelle Hospital to assess the impact of the IDRC project "[Community-based cause of death study linked to maternal and child health programmes and vital statistics](#)". Approximately 220,000 children and mothers die every year in Ethiopia, but the cause of death (COD) for most is

unknown because fewer than 30% of births and deaths are recorded. The project seeks to establish the COD linked to maternal and child health and also focuses on vital statistics in Ethiopia.

Gould toured the hospital's maternity and pediatric wards; the ante-natal care, delivery and post-natal care sections; and the neonatal ICU and operation theatres. Wubegzier Mekonnen, principal investigator of the IDRC research project, briefed Gould on the contributions of the project in improving COD data and its link to the country's recently launched Vital Events Registration System. The project will provide Ethiopia with its first-ever representative data on the causes of neonatal and maternal deaths, which will help to identify gaps in health services for mothers and children and make linkages between CODs and health outcomes that can be used to inform future policy.

Learn more about IDRC's [Innovating for maternal and child health in Africa program](#)

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