



IDEX UPDATE

Fall / Winter 2008 • Women Moving Forward

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One Woman's Hope, And A Cow, Transform A Family

When Patrociña Cristal Ventura first heard about a local microcredit and skills development program through her neighbor, she wondered how a loan to purchase a single cow could really change anything. Like generations of women before her, Patrociña had viewed herself primarily as a housewife and a mother. But she was curious. Maybe she could be an entrepreneur? Maybe a cow was not just a cow but also a way to provide for her family?

At her neighbor's urging Patrociña attended a meeting sponsored by APROSADSE, a partner of IDEX in Guatemala. The more she learned, the more it became clear. If she took a loan to buy a cow the milk could provide her five growing children with much needed nutrition. With the income from leftover milk she could send her children to school. And if you were to ask Patrociña about her dreams, she would be quick to tell you. What she wants most in life is to see her children go to school.

Few cars make it down to El Carmen, Patrociña's tiny community of around thirty families. There are no paved roads. Patrociña has a long and dusty walk to market in San Martín Jilotepeque. Even there staples like eggs and milk and fresh produce are often too expensive. Her family lives on a small, arid plot of land in a two-room house, the walls patched together with maize stalks and steel plates. One room is where she sleeps with her five children. The other is a kitchen with a wood-burning stove.

Many of the indigenous Maya Cak'chiquel people in this region, like Patrociña's family, practice

subsistence agriculture. But it is increasingly difficult to survive on their crops alone. In the dry season many farmers migrate temporarily to the coast to work on coffee and sugar cane plantations, and more frequently men now migrate permanently to urban areas. Even then it is still a struggle for families to cover basic necessities and children often do not go to school.



Patrociña with her bull.
Photo credit: Marlon García

Patrociña grew up in a rural community. She learned how to weave and cook, but never how to read or write. She married young, and last year, like many men, Patrociña's husband was forced to migrate in search of better opportunities for their children. This was a profound loss. Not only did migration separate the family, but Patrociña was also left to raise their children single-handedly, with limited funds.

The Association for the Promotion of Health and Socioeconomic Development (APROSADSE) is based in the Chimaltenango province of Guatemala. It was created in 1975 by a group of subsistence farmers. Today, APROSADSE is made up of community members working together to elevate the quality of life of families. They focus on initiatives like microcredit, organic agriculture projects, and adult education.

Patrociña's community is one of 15 currently receiving support through APROSADSE's Agroecology Program, which provides loans and training to groups and individuals for income-generating projects, such as livestock rearing,

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which are lucrative options for families with limited access to arable land. The program also promotes group savings and facilitates monthly technical assistance to each group.

Patrociña never envisioned she would be able to support her family on her own. But through a combination of small loans and technical training in livestock rearing, she has discovered an innate sense for business. In her group meetings, Patrociña is always the first to speak up; ready to share how she is maximizing her original investment. First, she sold her original cow. With the proceeds, she paid back her loan and bought another cow. She was able to sell that cow and buy a bull, which she calculated would yield an even higher profit at market.



Patrociña speaking up in a skills development meeting. Photo credit: Marlon García

Her children are growing strong on the milk they have to drink. Plus her renewed source of income is also providing milk for neighboring families. And, as she will proudly tell you, she can now afford to purchase uniforms, school supplies and pay for tuition for her three eldest school-age children.

Patrociña is not content to stop there. Her entrepreneurial spirit has encouraged her to expand her micro enterprise by making cheese. She has

also begun to use organic and free fertilizer (from the cows as well) for her two plots of the local chayote squash. In a short time, she has watched her income grow from zero into a steady stream.

Though her new life is busier than ever, Patrociña finds time to attend health-training workshops at APROSADSE's main office and returns motivated to extend her newfound tips in nutrition and family health to the rest of the women in her community.

APROSADSE's integrated approach ensures many community and family needs are met. By listening carefully and working closely with women, they are developing local leaders and economies that build strong communities. What's more, they are using sustainable methods to create this lasting change.

Your support is critical for IDEX to fund APROSADSE and many other organizations like it. Thank you for donating to IDEX. To find out more about how you can help women like Patrociña, subscribe to our email newsletter by emailing join@idex.org.



Patrociña (center) with women from El Carmen, who are with APROSADSE. Photo credit: Marlon García

About IDEX

Our Mission:

IDEX promotes sustainable solutions to poverty by providing long-term grants and access to resources to locally run organizations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Our Vision:

We envision a global community that embraces economic, social and cultural rights in which all people may access resources, preserve their environment, and are empowered to live free from poverty and discrimination.

We Value:

- Equitable partnerships with our grantees;
- Transparency, accountability, and integrity in all our relationships;
- Open communication with the communities we support;

- Grassroots solutions, free from agendas imposed by governments, corporations, or funding agencies;
- Local knowledge and leadership that encourages sustained community development;
- Changing the power dynamic in international grantmaking.



Women working on seed saving with IDEX Partner, ASHA, in Nepal. Photo Credit: Jan Stürmann.

In Practice: Reducing Poverty, Integrating Rights

IDEX works with 22 partners and grantees in Guatemala, Mexico, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, South Africa and Zimbabwe that are creating lasting solutions to poverty in their communities. They work on women's rights, civil rights, and human rights. And build local economies by: protecting their environment, creating food security, promoting local leadership, and involving the whole community in these initiatives.

IDEX News Roundup

International AIDS Conference

Mexico City recently hosted the XVII International AIDS Conference. Two of IDEX's partners, Girl Child Network of Zimbabwe and Positive Women's Network of South Africa were there to talk about their work and highlight the connection between women's empowerment and the HIV/AIDS crisis. Katherine Zavala, Coordinator of Programs, met up with the founders of both organizations, Betty Makoni and Prudence Mabele.



Stembile Mabhena, Betty Makoni and Lisa Bonogwe relax after speaking at the International AIDS Conference.

Betty Makoni also co-hosted a reception for Girl Child Network. Betty captured the audience's attention with her organization's critical work but the focus was on two students 11-year old Lisa Bonongwe and 18-year old Stembile Mabhena. Both girls talked eloquently about the importance of learning their rights at an early age, and shared what they thought needed to be done in response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in their country.

Shabbat Donations

We always enjoy hearing from former colleagues. Naturally we were pleased to see an envelope bearing the name of former IDEX Co-Director, Anne Schonfield. Imagine our delight to discover it contained a letter from her 8 year-old daughter Rebecca, and a donation of \$75.00 from Rebecca, her brother Theo, and their friends, Benjamin, Eliana and Jonah.

Rebecca explained that, "Friday nights our families get together and celebrate a Jewish holiday called Shabbat. We give away money for people who need it. We have been collecting [the money] since last October."

After discussing a number of organizations and researching them online, Rebecca explained that IDEX received the most number of votes.

IDEX EVENTS

IDEX Open House with guest Prakash Tyagi, Director of GRAVIS, based in Rajasthan, India

What: IDEX Open House - Reconnect and take in our new look

Where: IDEX Office, 827 Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

When: Thursday, October 30 from 5:00

Drop by to learn more about our work and upcoming plans. Mingle with staff, board and other supporters and enjoy incredible photography of some of partners in Bangladesh, Guatemala and Nepal.

Be An Advocate For IDEX Online

Are you an avid social networker? Would you prefer to pledge your support to IDEX online? Get your mouse, and click on!

- Read our blog. www.idex.org/blog/
- Become a fan of IDEX on FaceBook and encourage your friends to also become fans.
- Watch our videos on YouTube and forward us links to YouTube videos that could enhance our YouTube page. www.youtube.com/user/IDEXorg
- Join Change.org and become a supporter of IDEX.

If you can't find us on your favorite social networking site, let us know. Email Gillian Wilson at Gillian@idex.org. Find all these links, and more at www.idex.org.

Welcome Ces and Deborah

Next time you visit IDEX's office look for a couple of new faces. Cecilia Meneses, Ces, is our Office Manager. Ces hails from the Philippines and brings to IDEX nearly 15 years of experience working with non-profits. The next time you call you will most likely speak with her, so be sure to say hello.



Ces Meneses, IDEX's Office Manager

Deborah Goldberg fills the newly created position of Development Assistant supporting IDEX's Development Director, Anne Mawdsley. Originally from the Bay Area, Deborah has just recently returned from eight years in New York, where she worked in documentary film production.



Deborah Goldberg, IDEX's Development Assistant

Together they round out the IDEX staff and bring new skills and insights to our team.

UC Berkeley Lecture Series – An Interview With Pete Stanga

What: Interview and discussion about IDEX and how IDEX uses microcredit as a tool to combat poverty,

Where: UC Berkeley Campus (location to be announced)

When: Monday, November 3, 5:30-7:30

Pete Stanga, Executive Director of IDEX will be in conversation with Paula Goldman about IDEX and microcredit and how it can be used as a tool to combat poverty.

For more information visit www.idex.org/events.html

New Ways to Support IDEX

Looking for ways to put your values into action?

We have a hunch that you, our supporters, already think a lot about how to make the world a better place. Consider some new, simple ways to support IDEX. Contact us at (415) 824-8384 to learn more about all of these options.

- **Thoughtful shopping.** Before your next online purchase, take a look at iGive.com and idex.maati.com (formerly FreePledge) that give a percentage of a purchase price to IDEX. Register and select IDEX, then click on one of 165 participating stores and buy items as you would otherwise.
- **For the person who has everything, give a Gift of Conscience.** Birthday gifts, holidays, special celebrations or a simple thank you, a gift in their honor is truly special.
- **Set up a gift registry.** Are you getting married or having a birthday party? Consider asking your guests to give to IDEX.



Peter Furia and Jennifer Rubenstein celebrate their engagement. They have generously included IDEX on their gift registry.

- **Donate your car, boat, RV or SUV** and take a tax-deduction. IDEX has partnered with the Center for Car Donations. When the vehicle sells you get a donation receipt for the sale price. Call 877-411-3662 to arrange a convenient pick up time. Tell them you would like the proceeds to go to IDEX.
- **Ask your employer about its matching gift policy.** They may give a dollar-for-dollar gift to IDEX if you do.
- **Host a fundraising party** at your home. Have fun and bring support to communities around the world all at once.
- If you live in the Bay Area, clean out your closet and **donate your used clothing and housewares** to Community Thrift. Tell them it's for IDEX (#0147), and take a tax deduction for it, too.
- **And there's the simplest way of all: Just send in your gift using the attached envelope. No amount is too large or too small.**



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