

## Voices from The Field: The Link Between Climate Change and Migration

by Adriana Welsh, Program Coordinator of Ñepi Behña, an IDEX partner since 2010.

Although migration has long been a strategy for survival in rural communities of Hidalgo, the patterns have been changing.



**“We have seen the effect of climate change – combined with economic crisis – affect food production and in turn, migration.” - Adriana Welsh**

Migration has changed from something domestic and temporary – to nearby urban cities such as Mexico City or Guadalajara, for example, now to the United States for long periods of time and, on occasions, without return.

In some areas, the rains arrived late in the season. Then there were freezes that came early, destroying land and crops. This had serious consequences in the supply of staple foods like maize and beans, and family gardens. Now we are looking into recovering those family gardens and securing more seeds for families looking to replant.

In other areas, the hurricane

season was worse than usual, causing tropical rains, strong winds, and landslides that have closed roads and isolated communities, leaving many without food or basic services, and affecting cultivation.

And so, due to the lack of opportunity for employment and without the right conditions for agricultural production, many families look to migration as a strategy for survival.

I believe one of the cruelest impacts of migration has been the emotional one – being far away and separation of the loved ones is a high cost for families in these communities.

For women especially, there are challenges. They are most often left in charge of caring for children, maintaining the house and finding ways to earn income,

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**About Ñepi Behña:** The women-led organization Ñepi Behña works in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico with over 650 indigenous women to address chronic poverty in their communities.

Their wide-ranging activities include: supporting a fair trade artisan cooperative selling bath products made from natural and locally-grown plants; installing rainwater-capturing tanks and wood-saving stoves; support for savings and credit associations; and a sexual and reproductive rights program.

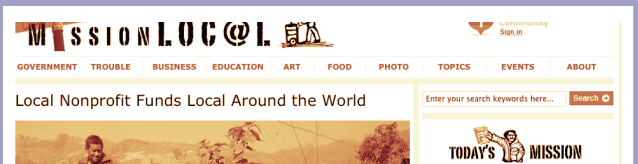
## IDEX in the News



### Grassroots Grow Anti-Starvation Gardens in *The Huffington Post*

“IDEX is not your typical top-down, know-it-all economic development nonprofit,” wrote Jonathan Lewis in his January article about the root causes of global hunger. The article highlighted IDEX and our partner Biowatch in South Africa.

“IDEX was started by a handful of ex-Peace Corps volunteers who believed ‘small grants targeted to grassroots groups – who had the trust of their neighbors and the knowledge of what was needed in their own communities’ -- would be more effective than traditional large scale philanthropy...Biowatch is one example of IDEX’s commitment to nurturing innovation and problem-solving at the village and community level.”



### IDEX was also recently featured in:

- Local Nonprofit Funds Local Around the World – *Mission Loc@l*
- Zimbabwe Alliance – *Seizing the Moment – Alliance Magazine*
- The Practice of Human Rights Grantmaking – *Human Rights Funding News*

To read the full articles and more, visit us online:  
[www.idex.org/news](http://www.idex.org/news)

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such as selling produce in the local market. They are working double or triple shifts with more responsibilities but not always accompanied with any real decision-making power.

More recently we are seeing many migrants returning home who are unable to find work elsewhere. Yet women are still doing the majority of work, inside and outside the home.

This year we have done many activities where women's voices can be strengthened. We've conducted radio programs and roundtable discussions with indigenous women and local authorities to communicate with each other.

This is alongside training women as community promoters to work on low-cost eco-technologies, such as constructing water-capturing tanks. In the desert-like conditions in the area, these tanks provide potable water for both family gardens and drinking and bathing, and save women from having to carry heavy buckets long distances.

Our work with artisan cooperatives, too, means more women are mobilizing and generating their own income with the artisan products they create, such as agave fiber sponges.

This allows them to have decision-making power over their income and provides a bit more autonomy. We see more and more women empowered with their new financial independence, giving them more leverage to negotiate with their husbands.

The income generated by women has become an important part of the economy in rural areas of



"We are working with families to rescue crops and local varieties of seeds to improve our diets, especially since migration had caused a huge change in our traditional diets, where we now see an increase in diabetes and malnutrition.

Household vegetable gardens are helping families sustain themselves by implementing more traditional ways of growing food. This support has helped feed families during times of financial crisis."

- Adriana Welsh, Ñepi Behña

Mexico. Combined with women increasing local food production, the value of women's work is gaining more respect within their families and communities. - Adriana Welsh is one of the founding members of Ñepi Behña and has dedicated her life to promoting rights and welfare of indigenous communities, specifically women.

What are other IDEX partners doing to build resiliency in the face of climate change? Visit our new page: [www.idex.org/climateaction](http://www.idex.org/climateaction) ■

## 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.

### Our Values

- 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

### In Practice: Empowering Women, Building Local Economies, Caring for the Environment

IDEX works with partners and grantees in Guatemala, Mexico, India, Nepal, South Africa and Zimbabwe. IDEX values community initiatives that come from people who want to create change for themselves. We provide the financial support. Local leaders and community members do the rest.

# The Fuel to Do More: A Donor's Perspective

-by Ravi Agarwal, as told to Deborah Goldberg



Traveling and volunteering have always been important parts of my life, and I had wanted to get involved with an organization that worked to decrease poverty in developing countries and IDEX's approach appealed to me.

I first became a supporter after attending an open house and meeting some of the staff and learning more about IDEX's grantees.

A few years ago, I volunteered in Tanzania, teaching AIDS awareness programs and working with street children. This experience in particular helped me see poverty up close and inspired me to use my skills and resources to make a difference.

Late last year, I traveled to South Asia. I hosted a party to see my friends before I left. I often do fundraisers at my parties to increase awareness among my friends, hoping in a way to influence them to get involved in social causes, and also raise

funds for worthy causes like IDEX.

While in Nepal, I was able to visit with ASHA, a long-time IDEX partner. The staff was incredibly passionate about their work, making huge sacrifices in their own lives.

It was then that IDEX's work felt even more "real" to me. I could see how effective the grants are in providing grassroots leaders with the fuel to be able to do even more in their communities.

While I've started three technology companies and have been an entrepreneur for most of my professional life, now my life has taken a different turn. I recently sold most of my belongings and vacated my apartment in San Francisco. I am now officially without a residence, traveling around the world. The end date is unknown!

Before I left I had another party to sell some remaining items and I donated the proceeds to IDEX. To me, being a supporter involves helping financially, building awareness, and leveraging my skills where I can. ■

*The work of IDEX is possible only through the generosity and commitment of our donor community. All of us at IDEX wish Ravi the best during his exciting adventure!*

**Would you like to host a house party or have other great fundraising ideas? IDEX welcomes your ideas. Please contact Anne Mawdsley at [anne@idex.org](mailto:anne@idex.org) or call 415.824.8384.**

## Another World Is Possible: IDEX South African Partners Take Center Stage at The World Social Forum

Four of IDEX's partners from South Africa traveled to Dakar, Senegal for the World Social Forum in February, a weeklong global forum of social justice changemakers representing over 130 countries.

Bongani Mthembu from IDEX partner South Durban Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) said their presentation to a packed audience was "a great opportunity to share our community's work with others and our research on pollution in South Durban."

"SDCEA played a central role in the climate action discussions," said IDEX Program Officer Yeshica Weerasekera, who traveled to Dakar to facilitate the partners' visit. She says she was inspired by the collaboration between IDEX partners, who had the opportunity to meet for the first time.

Yeshica was especially gratified by a workshop organized by Mary Tal of Whole World Women Association – a newer IDEX partner- and Prudence Mabele of Positive Women's Network

– a long-time partner.

"Both Prudence and Mary have much to offer. Prudence's courage and charisma as a leader in South African HIV/AIDS work held many participants spellbound," said Yeshica. "Mary is newer to the conference scene yet does powerful work addressing xenophobia faced by African refugees in South Africa."

Supporting each other and navigating the WSF together, Yeshica noted, the women leaders became close and now regard each other as allies.

Lawrence Mkhaliphi, from IDEX partner Biowatch, said "it was encouraging and heartening to meet so many like minds. Participating in the other IDEX partners' workshops, I have more information to bring back to my community."

*For more reflections by IDEX partners on the World Social Forum, visit: [www.idex.org/blog](http://www.idex.org/blog) ■*



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San Francisco, CA 94110-1736  
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To update your address or unsubscribe:  
addresschange@idex.org  
(415) 824-8384

Newsletter Editor: Deborah Goldberg • Design: Ramya Naidu • Printer: Inkworks Press, Berkeley, CA



At IDEX, we are honoring this milestone year by reflecting on both our rich history and looking forward to an exciting future. We'll be sharing stories and reports and reaching out to our wider community: staff, volunteer and board alumni, long-time supporters, and our many grassroots partners. We also want to celebrate with our newer supporters, our many allies in the field, and IDEX's Young Professional Group. We welcome everyone to join us in this year-long celebration!

You can find more details on our Jubilee Year at:  
[www.idex.org/25](http://www.idex.org/25)

IDEX is planning a series of celebrations to commemorate its 25th anniversary. Watch your mailbox for upcoming events, including a benefit concert, panels, house parties, partner visits, and more. Be sure to save the date for the first event!

### In Motion: A Photo Benefit Auction

**What:** A one-night photo auction party, hosted by the IDEX Young Professional Group and Pictopia.com. Join us for drinks, music, and an awe-inspiring collection of fine art and journalistic photographs from world-renowned photographers. All photos will up for auction, and all proceeds will benefit IDEX! This is an event not to be missed!

**When:** Tuesday, May 24th, 2011 at 6pm

**Where:** 111 Minna Street Gallery, San Francisco

**RSVP:** Visit [www.idex.org/events](http://www.idex.org/events) for ticket information and details.



Don't want to miss an event? Have IDEX news emailed to you!  
Sign up for our email list at: [www.idex.org/events](http://www.idex.org/events)