



IDEX UPDATE

International Development Exchange

Spring/Summer 2010 • Building Movements

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From San Martin Jilotepeque to San Francisco: An Exchange with our Guatemalan Partner APROSADSE



Simón takes a tour around Alemany Farm in San Francisco

For us at IDEX, it is always a welcome opportunity to receive a guest from one of our partner organizations. Earlier this year we had the honor of hosting Simón Estrada Guerra, a Program Director from APROSADSE, an IDEX partner since 2004.

APROSADSE is based in the remote rural areas in the Chimaltenango province, located in the Highlands region of Guatemala. They work with mostly indigenous Maya Cak'chiquel farming families.

Simón's story with APROSADSE begins in 1999, when he applied for a small loan from APROSADSE to start a grocery store. The store went on to become the village's first successful social enterprise. He joined APROSADSE as an intern and later became Program Coordinator for their Agroecology Program. Recently he was appointed to lead their Health Program. He was one of the first people in his town to attend college. Today he is studying for a degree in economic development while managing his job and caring for his family, which includes two young children and elderly parents.

Simón's 11-day trip to the Bay Area (his first visit to the United States) was planned to bring exposure and visibility to the work of APROSADSE. Just

as importantly it was to provide Simón with an opportunity to connect with like-minded groups in the US. It was also a chance for our community of supporters to learn first hand from a dynamic leader about the many grassroots successes in Guatemala.

From his first day Simón was eager to share the challenges and successes facing the communities APROSADSE works with. At events and house parties, staff and supporters alike were able to learn how APROSADSE empowers nearly 200 underserved communities with programs in education, health and agroecology.

Simón attended the annual Bioneers Conference in San Rafael. Through panel discussions and workshops proposing solutions to current environmental and social issues, Simón says he saw how APROSADSE's work fit into a larger context of global movements. He was inspired to know that what he and his colleagues are doing at the community level is being replicated around the world.

"The conference brought many initiatives to light, especially in mitigating climate change," says Simón. "Learning more about the struggle to reduce environmental problems gave me yet another reason to push forward with our own efforts, like implementing more wood-saving stoves."

And it was at Bioneers that he met with Antonio Roman-Alcalá, co-founder of Alemany Farm, a volunteer-run urban farm in San Francisco. Simón later visited the farm to see their organic agriculture projects in person.

Antonio in exchange learned about issues that face farmers in Guatemala. Many are unable to grow sufficient food for their families due to drought. Antonio was so inspired by Simón that he is planning a trip in 2011 to Guatemala to volunteer with APROSADSE.

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The rest of Simón's trip was a steady schedule of meetings and trips to organizations in the Bay Area, all planned around his interests as well as the interests of APROSADSE's membership. These included meetings with the Transnational Institute for Grassroots Research and Action (TIGRA), Centro Legal de la Raza and even a visit to the Civic Center to join community based organizations at a hearing.

At SF General Hospital, he visited their training course for nurse-midwives. This is similar to a program APROSADSE runs which is dedicated to serving vulnerable and underserved women and families.

"I was very impressed with the support pregnant women receive through the program," says Simón. "I am inspired to try and implement some of what I saw in my Health Program."

Mission High School was another stop. Here Simón saw how they integrate environmental education into their curriculum. He also met with Indigenous Permaculture, a grassroots organization that supports community food security.

"It's great how different groups are working on similar issues, and how interrelated health and the environment are to food justice and social justice," Simón says.

Indeed, Simón says his favorite part of the trip was in meeting so many diverse people involved in work similar to APROSADSE, as well as the many people who were truly interested in his work.

Decorative flourish 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.

One such valuable experience was meeting staff from Mujeres Unidas y Activas, a Bay Area social justice organization of Latina immigrant women. There he was able to hear about the women's experiences in the US. This was of particular interest as an increasing number of people from Guatemala are migrating to the US.

"Simón's visit reminds us why these alliances are so valuable," says Vini Bhansali, IDEX's Executive Director. "It reinforces for all of us the practical link between domestic and international movements."

On his return to Guatemala, Simón emailed us with the many ideas he plans to implement in APROSADSE's wide-ranging programs. For example, APROSADSE has a new initiative supporting families to grow household vegetable gardens to combat increasingly high levels of malnutrition. Inspired by the organic backyard composting he saw at Alemany Farm, he realized that the plant debris seen as waste could be used for nutrient-rich compost for their gardens.

Simón's trip was less than two weeks but the effects will be long lasting. He not only took back with him new ideas, he left in place an entire community of new friends and allies moved by his courage and determination.

IDEX extends our sincere appreciation to our hosts, their families, and the many organizations that made Simón's visit so fruitful.

To learn more about APROSADSE visit idex.org/aprosadse

Decorative flourish World Pulse Partnership With IDEX

IDEX is proud to announce a new partnership with World Pulse. World Pulse is a network of women connecting across oceans and cultural barriers to create a new world.

Now, World Pulse is joining in solidarity with IDEX and other like-minded organizations, to broadcast voices of women around the globe. From web to print, World Pulse has created a forum to connect and empower women everywhere. Join the movement today!



For IDEX fans: 2-for-1 Bonus!

Sign up for one subscription to World Pulse Magazine and get one free for a friend. Sign up now to receive their upcoming edition "Earth", spotlighting emerging women leaders worldwide who are transforming the environmental movement.

For more information visit worldpulse.com/partneroffer/start

IDEX Welcomes A New Executive Director

This February IDEX welcomed a new Executive Director, Rajasvini “Vini” Bhansali. Vini succeeds Pete Stanga, who served IDEX for six years as its Executive Director.



Rajasvini “Vini” Bhansali

Vini enters the role of Executive Director at a time when IDEX is even better positioned to serve our partners and communities. This is a direct result of key accomplishments such as the launch of a new website, completion of our strategic planning process, and increased grantmaking. Staff and Board alike are thrilled that Vini has accepted the position. We ask

that you join with us in extending to her our warmest welcome. *Read Vini’s full bio here, idex.org/about-us/vini*

Oxford Academy’s New Global Citizen Team

IDEX has partnered with New Global Citizens, an organization that partners young people with grassroots organizations, for the past three years. In this time we have been amazed and inspired by the student teams that work to raise awareness of our partner’s issues.

Recently we had the opportunity to speak with the student-led team at the Oxford Academy, a college preparatory school in Anaheim, CA. They are promoting the work of IDEX partner WACN in Nepal.

Their plans are to support WACN through fundraising and educating their local community about the challenges facing communities in Nepal. They said they picked this project, as they wanted to focus on a country that gets little publicity in the US.

The team started with weekly meetings to encourage fellow students to become involved. Around Thanksgiving they



The Oxford Academy NGC team highlighted issues in Nepal with key data. Students also made prayer flags.

organized a week-long advocacy event to introduce students to issues in Nepal including poverty, women’s rights and literacy. They highlighted how WACN was addressing these issues, and led activities such as making prayer flags.

But the team isn’t stopping here. They are now planning a fundraising gala in April and hope to attract students from surrounding schools.

We thank the Oxford Academy NGC Team for all their hard work and dedication to Nepal and WACN, and wish them every success with their April event.

A Field Visit To Southern Africa

IDEX Board member and adventurer, Diane Dodge, undertook a field visit to IDEX partners in Southern Africa over the holiday season. Diane began her trip in Western Zimbabwe, where she visited IDEX partner, Girl Child Network (GCN).

Diane met with Ruth, GCN’s Program Officer, at one of their Empowerment Villages. This is a strategically located safe house where girls receive medical care, legal aid, and counseling as they recover from abuse.



Students at one of GCN’s many girls’ clubs

Ruth shared with Diane that many people have left Zimbabwe because of the economic and political crises. Since there are fewer resources to connect with, there is less support available. Although it has been a challenging time,

GCN continues to provide services, as well as tuition and school supplies, to girls who otherwise would have nowhere to turn.

Diane saw first-hand how GCN provides a safe haven for girls. GCN also rescues girls from abusive situations. In fact, she was able to tell us that the reason the “drivers” are such critical members of the staff is that, while they do drive, they also double as case managers who perform emergency rescues as needed.

GCN continues to play a critical role in raising the profile of abuse in Zimbabwe. GCN has been instrumental in supporting people to speak out about abuse and persuading the courts to convict perpetrators.

For more stories and photos from Diane’s trip, visit idex.org/blog

Announcing A New Mexico Partner—Ñepi Behña

We are excited to announce that IDEX has a new partner in Mexico, Ñepi Behña (Women of Dignity). Ñepi Behña works with over 650 indigenous women in the state of Hidalgo. Their goals are to promote gender equity and empower women to build strong livelihoods.



A cooperative member prepares the agave plant after harvesting

One of Ñepi Behña’s main focuses is their Fair Trade Artisanship Program. This provides technical assistance to a 250-member indigenous cooperative. The cooperative sells agave plant fiber to the Body Shop and Ñepi Behña supports them with training in quality control, financial planning, and computer skills. Now this cooperative is launching a fair trade brand.

Other programs include installing rainwater-capturing tanks and wood-saving stoves, support for a 400-member savings and credit association, and a sexual and reproductive rights program.

To learn more about Ñepi Behña, visit our website, idex.org/what-we-do/partners

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Newsletter Editor: Gillian Wilson • Design: Soniya Rajwani • Printer: Inkworks Press, Berkeley, CA  Printed on Recycled Paper

 **Mark Your Calendars!**

Missed an event? Have IDEX news emailed to you! Sign up for our email newsletters and event invitations on our website idex.org/events

IDEX Panel Discussion on Migration, May 11

What: A Right to Home: Confronting the Global Crisis on Migration and Displacement

When: Tuesday, May 11, 2010 from 5:30 – 7:30pm

Where: World Affairs Council, 312 Sutter Street, San Francisco

RSVP: Please RSVP via brownpapertickets.com/event/105403 Everyone is welcome. Suggested donation of \$10, no one turned away.

Panelists: Nunu Kidane (Priority Africa Network), Colin Rajah (National Network on Immigrant and Refugee Rights), Joanna Levitt (International Accountability Project), and Maria Poblet (Causa Justa // Just Cause). Moderated by Rajasvini Bhansali (IDEX).

Join this panel of experienced community organizers, scholars, researchers and advocates for a timely discussion on migration and displacement. Learn about the challenges and innovative solutions that local communities are initiating. Find out what you can do to get engaged in these people-centered solutions.

Save the Date: IDEX Annual Event, June 9

What: IDEX's Annual Event to share with you the work of our partners

When: Wednesday, June 9, 2010 from 6:00 – 9:30pm

Where: The Solarium, 55 Second Street, San Francisco

RSVP: Expect your invitation by mid-May with details of how to RSVP.

IDEX invites you to celebrate the success of our partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America in building sustainable community solutions to poverty.

Join us for special guest speakers (TBA), live music, appetizers and wine, and an amazing silent auction.

In preparation for the big day, we are hosting kick-off events in the weeks running up to June 9.

If you would like to learn more or to see how you can get involved, visit idex.org/events