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Dear Neighbor,

Recently I spoke in Tulsa at the Committee on Foreign Affairs. The title of my talk was, “Development Challenges in an Unsafe and Uncertain World.” Indeed, each day brings news of new tragedies — often in the countries where World Neighbors works. In the year-and-a-half that I have been the President and CEO of World Neighbors, there have been two coup d’états in Burkina Faso, several deadly terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali and Kenya, two terrible earthquakes and a political standoff in Nepal, and a horrific smog crisis in Indonesia which became an international catastrophe when the haze moved to neighboring countries. This is just the short list of some of the disasters and crises facing these 13 vulnerable countries. The situations in Nepal and Indonesia are both discussed in more detail in this issue.

While there is terrifying news every day, there are also signs of positive change. In Guatemala, for the first time in their history, the President was put on trial for corruption, found guilty, and imprisoned. In Kenya, despite the terrorism in the North, the economy is thriving and growing.

The countries where we work are indeed susceptible to natural disasters and are often politically unstable. However, in communities where women are able to speak out and make an income, where girls and boys are going to school for 12 years, where girls are not forced to marry at a young age, where families can own their own land and can invest in their future, and where men and women have a chance to reach their own potential, there is a much higher chance of stability and peace.

A review of the United Nations’ Millennium Challenge Goals revealed that global poverty is decreasing. Average incomes are increasing, infant mortality is decreasing, more girls are going to school, malaria and AIDS deaths have declined dramatically and there are many other positive trends. While there is much work still to be done, each community we work with is evidence of the incredible impact that your donations and caring are making. By helping people to help themselves, not only are we helping each person to reach his or her full potential, we are also creating a more secure and safer world for all of us.

With enormous gratitude,

Kate Schecter, Ph.D.
President and CEO
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Indonesia's Burning Problem: Putting a Stop to Slash and Burn

By Kate Schecter and Edd Wright

A version of this article was published in *Foreign Affairs* on November 11, 2015.



On October 25, 2015, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, had to cut his official visit to the United States short. Indonesia was burning. Every year, farmers in Indonesia purposely light their land on fire to quickly clear it for new crops. This technique, called slash and burn, is used around the world. But this year, an extra-long dry season coupled with a tropical storm left the country burning for over two months. Indonesia—and neighboring Singapore and Malaysia—were covered in a toxic brown haze. Throughout the region, schools, airports, and other public services had to shut down because of smog, and half a million cases of respiratory illness were reported.

According to the Global Fire Emissions Database, on many days in September and October the carbon dioxide (“CO₂”) emissions from the fires in Indonesia exceeded the daily average emitted by the United States. In fact, in those two months alone, the fires released more CO₂ than what Germany emits in a year.

Slash and burn is popular in Indonesia because it is an easy way to clear large tracts of land and it readies the soil for palm, from which palm oil is made. Indonesia is the world's largest producer of palm oil, which is used in cosmetics and biofuels. Indonesia's palm oil output, two-thirds of which is exported, has increased nearly 50 percent since 2008. Even though slash and burn is technically illegal in Indonesia, the government has not regularly enforced the rules. Right now, it is not even clear who started the fires: many of the private palm oil

companies, which are owned by foreign conglomerates, claim that they do not use slash and burn.

What is clear is that small local farmers, displaced by these large private companies, do turn to illegal deforestation to maintain their livelihoods. In Indonesia, 75 percent of the country's 472 million acres of land is classified as State Forest Land. Around 30 percent of this land does not contain trees, making it especially attractive to small farmers.

World Neighbors is helping small-scale farmers to find legal means to farm on State Forest Land. In fact, working and living outside the law is unnecessary since Indonesian forests can be accessed and managed through a variety of legal channels, such as the national forest registry, community plantation forests, or village forest plans. Many farming communities are unaware of these opportunities. Hundreds of thousands of farmers could benefit from legal access to these lands, including families that have illegally lived on them, sometimes for generations.

Even so, the process to obtain recognition and protection of rights can be daunting. A community must map the forest land it wishes to manage, create a community organization, learn and understand the various forestry programs, and, finally, submit a proposal to the Ministry of Forestry. The entire process can take up to four years.

A legal right to manage forest land, although necessary to minimize deforestation, is not sufficient in and of itself to protect the land. Indonesian small farm communities also require training in sustainable forestry and farming techniques to support themselves and responsibly participate in the global palm oil market. Sustainable agriculture, soil and water conservation, and agro-forestry all help increase output and negate the need for slash and burn. For example, planting more than one crop ensures that the soil is not leached of nutrients and can be used without being burned. Rainfall prediction studies and



mapping help farmers plant at the best times and reap two crops a year where they might have only had one in the past. Use of livestock manure and urine for fertilizers and insecticides can help farmers do their work at a far lower cost to themselves and to the environment.

World Neighbors, with the support of the Ford Foundation, works with local partners to ensure that farmers obtain land rights. We have helped 16,000 Indonesian farmers obtain the legal right to cultivate state forest lands. Over 37,000 acres have been planted with rice, nuts, coffee, and a variety of fruits and vegetables using low-cost sustainable techniques including those described above.

Through adequate technical assistance and appropriate technology transfer, many more local Indonesian communities can use responsible techniques to farm their land. In addition, these farmers can and are working for themselves, rather than for the conglomerates that control the palm oil plantations. The communities' stake in these forest lands is legal and direct, which provides them with strong incentives to protect rather than slash and burn the land. For instance, none of the farmers who received assistance through our program engage in slash and burn. Scaling a program like ours—from tens of thousands of acres to millions—would dramatically lower the amount of vegetation and trees subject to slash and burn, and as a result reduce the practice's terrible environmental impact.

Indonesia's fire crisis has brought unwanted attention to Indonesia and its agricultural system. There is a straightforward solution to this crisis: giving communities a direct stake in the land that they live on through legal protections and sustainable farming practices. It is the best way to increase rural incomes and prevent massive deforestation. What is happening in Indonesia may be a regional crisis, but at the end of the day it affects everyone on the planet.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-11-11/indonesias-burning-problem>

For those readers who have requested an e-version of Neighbors, we will begin to email it to you with the spring 2016 edition.

Looming Humanitarian Crisis in Nepal

This interview was first published in *Review Nepal* on November 17, 2015.



Srijana Karki Thapa, Regional Director for South Asia, and Sangita Pandit, Program Associate

As widely reported in the worldwide media, Nepal suffered major earthquakes last April, killing more than 8,000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. Then, in September, as Nepal's recovery efforts were taking hold, there was an undeclared blockade of roads from India – Nepal's key supply routes. As of the end of January, the situation has not been resolved and the people of Nepal continue to suffer from shortages of oil and gas, medications, and many other basic necessities.

Srijana Thapa is the South Asia Regional Director for World Neighbors (WN). She lives in Kathmandu, Nepal. WN has been working in Nepal for 43 years. Srijana spoke with *Review Nepal* about the current political crisis and its effect on WN work in Nepal.

How is the unofficial trade blockade impacting you and your work?

Like many people in the country, we're directly affected by fuel shortages. We're now using a woodburning stove in Kathmandu, which is ironic, since we are helping build smokeless stoves in the communities in which we work.

The black market is flourishing, inducing inflation – prices of consumer goods surged by an average of 11.6 percent in December, the highest in the last 40 months. The cost of legumes increased by a startling 48.9 percent; ghee (butter) and cooking oil by 42.3 percent;



education fees by 12.5 percent; housing and utilities by 11.4 percent. In general, people spend much of their day in queues to get fuel and cooking gas.

Travel costs have also increased, forcing WN to postpone field visits. It's difficult to gather people in one place for trainings or workshops. Our concern is for Nepal's vulnerable rural communities, especially those who lost shelter due to the earthquakes.

What is your main concern with these communities?

Winter is hitting hard for these communities. Families without shelter, or living in temporary shelter, are really suffering with inadequate fuel for heating and cooking. Nepal indeed is on the verge of a significant humanitarian crisis if the trade blockade is prolonged.

How is your group preparing for this potential crisis?

We are trying to alert people in the U.S. and other countries to the current situation in Nepal so a worse crisis is avoided. Americans and others generously donated to help Nepal rebuild after the earthquake. This is an opportunity for people to raise their voices to help prevent a man-made disaster.

City people are more affected with this crisis than people living in villages that WN has served because our program teaches community people to become self-reliant at individual and community levels. This is helping them during the present situation. For example – many of our beneficiaries do not have to buy vegetables from outside – they grow their own. With the introduction of smokeless stoves in more than 100 households in our working areas in Chitwan, people are not suffering from shortages of kerosene or gas.

What is World Neighbors doing to help people recover from the earthquake?

Even though WN is not a relief organization, we were positioned to help with the relief effort immediately after the earthquakes by distributing food, medicine, water filtration tablets and material for shelter.

Since then, we have consulted with the communities where we work and helped each develop an annual plan for recovery. The recovery plan is modeled around two core areas — disaster risk reduction and sustainable livelihoods. WN works with communities over a long term, often up to ten years, helping and facilitating communities to become self-reliant. We are helping to plant vegetables that can be harvested quickly, and supporting them with goat farming so that they earn enough to start rebuilding their destroyed homes.

Working with a community means working in close collaboration with local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), with the long-term goal of creating self-reliant groups, savings and credit cooperatives and larger economic and social organizations.

Currently, WN programs are reaching out to 11 Village Development Committees in five districts, both in the hills and the Terai region of the central and Western development region of Nepal. Ninety-five percent of our program participants are rural women.

Are you hopeful the current situation can be resolved and a humanitarian crisis avoided?

Yes, we are. There is no doubt that we are in a transition phase, but Nepal's constitution has garnered appreciation from the international community. For the first time in its history, Nepal has adopted a constitution which is supposed to be representative of the Nepali people. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has urged "all sides" in the region to find a way to solve the impasse and resume normal activity. Like so many others, we look forward to a quick solution that allows everyone to get on with building a better society.



A Leading Farmer in Peru: Martha Carpio

Martha Carpio's day begins between four and five in the morning, when she wakes up to care for her elderly father and two disabled brothers. Martha never married or had children, but, with help from World Neighbors, the 51-year-old has become a successful farmer, provider and community leader. Martha lives in the village of Llacolla, located in the district of Ocros in Ayacucho, Peru.

Surrounded by a forest of eucalyptus trees, Martha kneels to tend her organic lettuce field, which is thriving, thanks to a water reservoir she learned to build.

"Before, my water tank was small and I did not care about improving it," she said. "But when the technicians from World Neighbors showed me that a better tank would improve my crops, I took their advice. Now I am the model for my neighbors and I teach them from my own experiences."

When World Neighbors first came to the community of Llacolla in 2014, Martha was suspicious of outsiders in the village. The local authorities assured World Neighbors staff that Martha was hard working and well respected in the community. Developing trust with her would be vital to the success of the project.

"I was kind of shy," she says. "I didn't know what to say."

Despite her initial misgivings, Martha is a calm and generous person. She is an excellent hostess and works to make visitors feel at home. She is proud of her community's culture, especially its festivals, when people who have moved away from Llacolla return home for the celebrations.

Of course, caring for her father and brothers has always kept Martha near her home, but with the sustainable farming techniques she gained from World Neighbors, she has increased her crops exponentially.

"I used to produce maybe one sack of carrots and beetroot," Martha says. One sack weighs 20 kilos, or 44 pounds. "But now I can produce up to eight sacks, thanks to the support and advice provided. Building a good water reservoir and buying proper tools has increased my production."

At least three Fridays a month, Martha and her brothers take her products to the market fair in Chumbes, which serves as the commercial hub for nearby villages. The market is 18 kilometers (11 miles) from her home. She takes public transportation, usually a truck, to get her products to the market.

"My customers pay me a better price now because my crops look healthier and beautiful," Martha says. "I have a big variety of legumes and vegetables in a larger space."

With the increased revenue, Martha is more confident purchasing seeds in bulk now that she knows how to better care for them. Her dream is to buy a three-wheeled truck for taking crops to market.

Because of her knowledge and optimism, Martha is often asked to take leadership positions in the community. She is reluctant to take on too many responsibilities for fear that her father and brothers will not receive proper care. But her desire to help others and her hope for the future dwarf any worries or burdens she may have.

"I want to help other women of my community, especially those who are raising a family on their own, so they can have a chance to escape poverty," she says. "I have improved my life by myself and I appreciate how World Neighbors works because they gave me training and knowledge to work out my own solutions."

There is still plenty of work for World Neighbors to do in this region. All the surrounding communities have been negatively affected by political violence and terrorism of the last several years. The region has experienced higher rates of school dropout, illiteracy, chronic malnutrition and poverty.

Fortunately, people like Martha help ensure our work makes a difference.

From Buyers to Sellers: Women in Nepal Learn to Grow Organic Produce to Feed Their Families and Increase Their Income

World Neighbors invests in local leadership organizations to develop programs that provide lasting solutions to poverty, hunger and disease. The programs teach communities valuable skills and help establish a framework to make communities economically viable.

An example would be the Didi Bahini and Namuna women's groups in a small, impoverished community in the Bhatauri Ward, Tanahu District of Nepal. These women have lived as one of Nepal's lowest castes and consist of 33 households with an average of 5.5 family members. They are extremely poor and live on land owned by the Nepali government, but managed by a local religious Temple that allows them to live there. The women have lived on the Temple's land for 20 years but have no guarantee of tenancy. Despite their apprehensive situation, they are still determined to bring positive changes around them. With few gardening skills, they have lived on a diet of bland soybean and rice balls.

In August 2014, World Neighbors collaborated with a local NGO, the Women's Group Coordination Committee (WGCC), to organize the Didi Bahini and Namuna groups and train them to grow enough vegetables to provide for their families and to sell at the local market. With their increased harvest and income, they now enjoy a diverse diet, including nutritious meat and vegetables. The program emphasized the dangers of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and today the women are ambassadors of organic food production. The women also learned how to preserve their own seeds to plant in the future and how to prepare homemade non-toxic pesticides and fertilizers to sustainably protect their crops. Now the group demonstrates seed preservation and organic vegetable



production to others in their community as a means to save money and improve their health.

The women's vegetable sales are gradually increasing as others in their community learn of the benefits of gardening without toxic chemicals. Annually, the women earn an average of Nepalese Rupee ("NPR") 55,000-60,000 (US\$500-600) each year from their kitchen gardens, which is considered a substantial income in Nepal. The added income has allowed them to continue to improve their livelihoods through goat keeping, hen raising, and pig farming.

Recently, the Ward Secretary of Bhatauri demonstrated appreciation for the women's efforts by providing them with NPR 20,000 to buy containment barrels to make organic pesticides. The World Neighbors program also taught the women to make and sell brooms, and they plan to provide broom grass seed and teach broom

making to others in their area. The women say that credit for their achievements goes to the World Neighbors program, local partners and the social mobilizer, a local woman who received advanced training from World Neighbors to help implement and facilitate the program.

One of the shopkeepers from the local market in Devghat jokingly shared - "Have

women from Bhatauri stopped eating vegetables? They do not frequent the market these days."

In truth, they and their families are actually eating more fresh, organic vegetables than ever and they are producing these foods themselves. These women are recognized as agents of change in their community and other women are empowered to become self-reliant through organic food production.

This program demonstrates World Neighbors positive impact on people who need them the most — undereducated, economically disadvantaged women are given the training and support to sustain their families and enrich their community.

Commemorative Gifts Received

IN MEMORY OF

Rose S. Barth
Craig Barth

Bob Callahan
Kathleen Callahan

Craig Heberton III
Persky/Heberton Family

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Cathy Beyer

John G., Clara and
David Worley
John Worley

IN HONOR OF

Mr. and Mrs. Kurt Alverson
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Burt Barth
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Clay and Louise Bennett
Hunt Lowry

Paul and Ione Billhymer
Curtis Billhymer

IN HONOR OF, cont.

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IRA Charitable Rollover Made Permanent!

By Jim Morley

Since 2006 IRA Charitable Rollovers have been an on-again-off-again benefit to persons at least age 70.5. Let's take a look at this benefit signed into law on December 18, 2015, which is now permanently available.

Transfers can be made directly to charities – such as World Neighbors – from traditional IRAs, inherited IRAs and Roth IRAs for up to \$100,000 per year. For spouses, each with substantial IRA accounts, the total can reach \$200,000 per year. But what's the benefit if a "regular" charitable contribution is also deductible?

Here is a partial list of potential tax breaks to discuss with your tax advisor:

- If you take the standard deduction (i.e., don't itemize on your tax returns), you may be entitled to tax savings;
- If you pay state taxes, this may reduce taxable income, depending on state laws;
- If your charitable deductions are subject to limitations, the limitations are not affected by this charitable rollover;
- An increase in income by a "regular" distribution from an IRA may negatively offset your ability to use other deductions, but with this rollover your income is not increased;
- A qualified charitable rollover does not increase income for calculating tax on Social Security benefits; and
- A qualified charitable rollover does not increase income for determining possible extra charges added to your premiums for Medicare Part B and Part D.

IRA Charitable Rollovers do count toward Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs). They can be made directly to qualifying charities but not toward purchasing a Charitable Gift Annuity or any other kind of contribution with a return benefit to the donor. Also, qualified rollovers are eligible to be used toward satisfying pledge commitments to charities.

IRA Charitable Rollovers are easy! Your financial institution can readily make the transfer from your IRA to the charity or charities of your choosing.

Please talk to your tax advisor about rolling over your IRA, or learn more at the IRS website: www.irs.gov or contact me at jmorley@wn.org.



**WORLD
NEIGHBORS**

Inspiring People • Strengthening Communities

OUR MISSION

World Neighbors inspires people and strengthens communities to find lasting solutions to hunger, poverty and disease and to promote a healthy environment

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