



Mission UpReach Newsletter

Sustainability & Mission UpReach

By: Phil Waldron, CEO, Mission UpReach, Inc.

Sustainability: What is it & why is it important to Mission UpReach?

Do a search on Google for the definition of **Sustainability** and you will find a wide variety of definitions. Probably the most simple and direct definition that I found, that makes any sense is, “*the ability to maintain or support a process continuously over time.*”

As a child my parents moved our family to Karachi, Pakistan in 1967. Since that time my parents worked in Pakistan, Australia, Hong Kong, Ukraine, Nepal, and India as missionaries both as resident, expats and as short-term, missionaries coming and going from a particular country for months at a time. This childhood experience of mine coupled with the experience that Donna and I have had with our own family as missionaries in México, for five years from 1998 to 2003 and then in Honduras for the past 15 years, has exposed me to many successful missions as well as many more that were not successful.

In this experience, I have seen and heard about too many missions and projects begun by well-meaning individuals and/or churches that begin with great enthusiasm but ultimately end when the original founders or missionaries return to the US after serving their time on the field. Data on nonprofits in the US, as reported by the National Center on Charitable Statistics, is that 30% of domestic nonprofits fail before their ten-year anniversary, due to lack of funding. Anecdotally, the experience that I have gleaned personally and vicariously through my parents’ missionary experience and many good friends that spent their lives on the foreign mission field, indicates that the failure

rate of missions on the foreign field, both nonprofit and church missions, is much higher than the US domestic rate of failure.

This leads me to the point of this article this month and that is, “what is sustainability as it relates to Mission UpReach and why is it important?” To anyone that has been involved with Mission UpReach for any length of time it is clear that the mission of MUR will not be completed during Phil and Donna’s tenure as co-founders and leaders. Simply stated, the mission of MUR is, “to transform lives with the Gospel by educating, training and providing opportunities to the 1.7 million people that live in the Western Highlands of Honduras.”

For Donna and me, the MUR Board and the many, many supporters that have sacrificed to sustain our efforts over the last fifteen years, it is gratifying to look back and see all that God has done by directing our footsteps and flourishing the results. I will turn sixty-three this August and as we look forward to the coming years and the challenges that we face, it is clear that the mission is far from complete. We are only just now seeing the first generation of young people that have been impacted by our teaching and training become the leaders that will be required in the coming years.

Truth be told, the greatest threat to our future is the lack of financial resources. Over the past 15-years large donations have often come from older men and women who were in their golden years having sold businesses and felt the need to do good with the resources that God had blessed them with. Many of those friends and supporters have now gone on to their reward in Heaven. This fact alone illustrates a significant challenge of

creating sustainability in the mission of MUR. Truth be told, the largest barrier to MUR achieving even more impressive results, than what we have already seen God bless us with, is the lack of resources. Personnel resources are critical to us accomplishing the mission, but personnel challenges can be met if we could only increase the amount and longevity of our incoming donations.

Since the 1960’s, when my parents moved our family to Pakistan, the dynamic of how churches go about doing missions has changed significantly. In today’s environment it is rare to find churches able to make more than a one-year commitment at a time. For Mission UpReach, this particular dynamic coupled with other factors such as the passing away of older friends and donors; has created an existential threat to MUR’s desire to fulfill our mission. Some years ago, MUR’s Board recognized the reality of the historical, life-cycle pattern of typical missions and nonprofits, i.e., they rarely survive the founders.

In an effort to steward the resources that God has blessed us with and with an eye on the future, knowing that to fulfill the mission, MUR needs to be focused on a multi-generational impact; the Board moved into the development of agricultural businesses on our Moses Project farm to create jobs for local people and to generate additional revenue to sustain the operations of our ministry programs. This decision has been one of the best decisions that the Board has made over the years and one of the most difficult things that we have ever done. We are years into the investment process of building our ag businesses and are only now just reaching a point where we can

Continued on Page 2



Sustainability, continued from Page 1

look forward and see that we are finally close to realizing our dream of generating significant additional income over and beyond what comes in as donations.

The old saying, “so close yet so far,” applies in our current situation though. We aren’t there yet. And our donations aren’t sufficient to sustain all our ministries. The Board is taking all steps necessary to assure that we survive into the future and can thrive in our fulfillment of our mission.

We have dramatically reduced our workforce. We have taken painful and dramatic steps to temporarily shut down projects and ministries that do not have “earmarked funds” sustaining them. One of the most painful decisions that we had to take to move forward was to temporarily close our ESPERO school for deaf adults. This ministry is a good example to illustrate the challenges of funding mission programs. The school has been in operation for eight years. Each year, without having a single source of funding that could cover the operations cost, we operated on faith. I have talked with numerous churches about the possibility of them funding 50% of the

annual operations cost without being able to successfully find a church that had the budget or interest in sponsoring this work. As a result, we have funded it out of our general, unrestricted funds. The time has now come that we just don’t have the availability of unrestricted funds to continue.

As you can imagine this was a very difficult decision. The deaf in our community are the most marginalized people that you could imagine. The life-transforming impact that this school has had on the lives on dozens of deaf adults is as inspiring as it is undeniable.

Several factors led to our Board’s decision to temporarily suspend school operations. The number one factor, and the one that ultimately mandated the closure, was the scarcity of available funds. The second factor was that our Staff failed to adequately recruit students for this academic school year. In their defense, the deaf adult community here is, in general, an emotionally immature community and subject to vacillating emotions, much like a pre-teen experiences a roller coaster of emotions. They just haven’t had the same emotional

development that a hearing, educated person benefits from. One must remember that these adults usually come to us without any education and often without any formal sign training meaning that the manner that they communicate with family and friend is through gestures and charades versus a formal sign language. This lack of education seems to lead to an arrested emotional development and presents great challenges to our Staff as they teach them.

Please remember MUR in your prayers as we navigate these waters. Our Board is now benefiting from the advice and guidance of two, very experienced consultants that are helping us to formulate a Strategic Plan. This plan will identify a succession plan that will guide MUR over the next ten years as Donna and I move on to the next phase in life. It is also identifying the steps of a well-designed plan for creating sustainable revenue, that will not only fund our existing programs and ministries but, with God’s blessing and guidance, will fuel the growth of these ministries thus allowing us to scale up the number of people being impacted.

Moses Project begins school year

It is always exciting to welcome the young men who make up our Moses Project back to campus. This year we welcomed back 10 young men and welcomed for the first time 8 new young men. This year, all the old and new boys participated in our Bible camp, making the transition for the new boys a bit easier. It also helped that we had a lot of exciting things going on when they got to campus, including our annual board meeting as well as a visiting team who were busy tiling the dormitory and occasionally playing some pickup soccer with the boys. Additionally, our DESEO team provided some added activities to make the boys feel welcomed. The busyness coupled with extra hugs and smiles created a warm and welcoming atmosphere. All the boys are back in school and adjusting well. Please pray for each of them as they adapt.





News and notes...



Crimson Group Visits

The Crimson Group of Companies brought team members from Canada, Colorado, and Texas to focus on laying tile in the Moses Project's dormitory. The dorms have had rough concrete floors since being constructed some 12 years back. The improvement of having tiled floors is amazing. The team worked hard and accomplished a lot. They enjoyed their daily interactions with the boys and didn't mind getting beat at soccer on a regular basis. On their last day, they bought pizza and ice cream for the boys as well as the other workers involved in the project. They also purchased new soccer cleats for each of the boys, which meant the world to them. We love teams who come to serve and improve and even more importantly, love on the boys at the Project. Thank you, Crimson Group!



DESEO Project Passes out Uniforms and Backpacks

Our child sponsorship program, The DESEO Project, provides uniforms, shoes, backpacks, and all the school supplies for the year for the children who are sponsored. Unfortunately, we only have about 95 sponsored children out of the 1200 we serve. It would be challenging yet amazing to be able to do this for all the children in our program. The photos express the joy of the children, but the impact is hard to explain in words or photos. Many of these children would be forced to drop out of school because their parents simply don't have the resources to purchase the basics like uniforms and school supplies.

Thank you to our sponsors and their continued support for these children. Please consider joining our team of sponsors by selecting a child today at www.deseoproject.com.

MEET OUR TEAM

Board of Directors

Wayne Kellis

Chairman
Retired President, NaturChem
Watkinsville, GA



Phil Waldron

President, CEO
Mission UpReach, Inc.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras

Jeff Simpson

Treasurer
Sr. VP, NaturChem
White Oak, TX



Donna Waldron

Vice President, Secretary of Corp.
Mission UpReach, Inc.
Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras

Dr. Adam Spencer

Director
Spencer Orthodontics
Longview, TX



Doris Shelton Gulley

Executive Committee
Retired CPA, Equifax
Dunwoody, GA

Dr. Kory Cummings

Director
Cummings Optical
Fort Worth, TX



Phil Berry

Executive Committee
President, N. American Mining Co.
Orlando, FL

Dr. Scott Bedichek

Director
Alliance Implants
Fort Worth, TX



Board Meeting

Our annual board meeting is held in February. The last board meeting on the ground here in Honduras was February 2020, just before the pandemic hit. It was exciting to have them all here again and for them it was exciting to see the progress in person. We had many things to talk about and decisions to make, some of them challenging. We love and appreciate our board members more than we can express. Pray for them as they continue to make decisions and cast the vision for the future of Mission UpReach.

Basketball Training

While public schools begin in February, the inconsistency of students and teachers means we begin our official DESEO program in March. Meanwhile, our team is busy preparing for the year. Part of their preparation this past month was a weeklong basketball training led by Tyler Harbison. Tyler focused a lot on how to referee but also worked on drills that will be useful to the children who will be in our basketball league this year.





A note from Donna

As Phil explained in his article, the decision to close the deaf school (for now) was a very difficult one. It is very challenging to make such decisions when one can see the impact a program is having.

However, often there are factors that come together to cause one to consider if God might be redirecting efforts. We do see this as a “pause” in our outreach to the deaf community.

One thing Phil didn’t mention was a conversation some months back with a person I consider to be a pioneer in outreach to the deaf of Honduras. As I expressed my concerns over our educational standards

and accomplishments to date, she shared her own experience initially towards deaf adults. While providing educational and vocational opportunities for deaf adults is very important, getting upstream and reaching deaf children is even more important for the long term impact on the deaf community. For that reason, she began a school for deaf children in Tegucigalpa that has successfully transformed the lives of many deaf children who are now adults functioning well in a hearing world.

As we look ahead, we hope and pray for the opportunity to open a school for deaf children in Santa Rosa de Copán, with continued opportunities for the adult deaf we have been serving. We will wait with anticipation God’s provision of resources to bring this dream to fruition. While sad, we trust God. We covet your prayers.

2024 Brigade Season

VCOM.....	January 1-7.....	Medical
Redtail Community Foundation.....	February 4-11	Construction
Brad Russell Medical Team	February 24-March 2	Medical
Country View Family Farms	March 16-23	Construction
VCOM.....	March 23-30	Medical
Ryan Duncan Team.....	May 19-26	Surgical
Southside CofC, TX	June 8-15	Medical
Southside CofC, KY	June 22-29	Medical
VCOM.....	July 7-14.....	Medical
Pine Tree CoC, TX.....	July 20-27.....	Medical
VCOM.....	December 14-21	Medical

Mission UpReach Board

Scott Bedichek, Ft. Worth, TX
 Phil Berry, Coral Springs, FL
 Kory Cummings, Ft. Worth, TX
 Wayne Kellis, Gilbert, SC
 Dorris Gulley Shelton, Dunwoody, GA

Jeff Simpson, White Oak, TX
 Adam Spencer, Longview, TX
 Donna Waldron, Santa Rosa de Copán
 Phil Waldron, Santa Rosa de Copán

Other Giving

Mission UpReach is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We can assist you to designate MUR in a corporations’ matching gifts program, or giving through a United Way campaign, or as you prepare wills for your estate.

Please contact us:

Our mailing address is as follows:

Mission UpReach, Inc.
3221 Dundee Road
Longview, TX 75604

Please send all checks, donations and correspondence to this address.

You can correspond directly with

Phil and Donna at:
 Phil and Donna Waldron
 Apartado Postal #255
 Santa Rosa de Copán, Copán
 Honduras, Central America
 donna.w@missionupreach.org
 Phone: 706-534-7060

 facebook.com/missionupreach

 twitter.com/missionupreach

 instagram.com/missionupreach