



BROTHER'S BROTHER FOUNDATION

IN SEARCH OF SUSTAINABILITY

by Ozzy Samad

I'll start again by wishing everyone well as we continue working through the trials and tribulations of life in the age of COVID-19. You'll be pleased to know that BBF has expanded its response to the pandemic by providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to a widening array of partners primarily serving the most vulnerable members of our community. These efforts complement an actual year over year increase in our normal relief work thanks to the unrelenting work of dedicated staff members and your invaluable support.

While signing off a Zoom video conference meeting with three of our partners in regard to planning for a sustainable eye clinic on the island of Roatán, off the Honduran coast, I couldn't help but think what a great story it would be to share with you. The project is still in its infancy though everyone involved is committed to seeing it to fruition.

But first, Sustainable Development - a commonly used term in today's development circles - perhaps even a buzz word, but what does it mean and where does BBF fit in?

If you google sustainable development, it appears to mean many different things to different people. The explanation below approaches the topic from both a macro and micro perspective, respectively. Per the UN website, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the world's best plan to build a better world for people and our planet by 2030. Whereas these provide a broad-based vision, the example that follows provides an insight into actual implementation through BBF's involvement in helping bring about the planned eye clinic in Roatán, mentioned earlier.

There are 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals which are outlined as follows:

- **NO POVERTY** – end poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- **ZERO HUNGER** – end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- **GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING** – ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- **QUALITY EDUCATION** – ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.
- **GENDER EQUALITY** – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- **CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION** – ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- **AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY** – ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
- **DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH** – promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
- **INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE** – build resilient Infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- **REDUCED INEQUALITIES** – reduce inequality within and among countries.
- **SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES** – make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- **RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION** – ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- **CLIMATE ACTION** – take urgent action to combat climate changes and its impacts.
- **LIFE BELOW WATER** – conserve and sustainably use the oceans, sea, and marine resources for sustainable development.
- **LIFE ON LAND** – protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- **PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS** – promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- **PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS** – strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Images provided by Dr. Jenny Yu

While these goals provide a broad-based framework for global development, our goal at BBF is to help bridge the gap between aid and sustainability by providing programmatic support and essential resources. This can be accomplished in a number of ways such as BBF's efforts in providing essential medicines and medical supplies to partners, helping with infrastructure support through solar projects, assisting after disasters, and providing education materials.

Background: The Roatán eye clinic project came about after BBF Board Member Dr. Jenny Yu returned from a trip to Clinica Esperanza in conjunction with Health-in-Sight Mission. As some of you may know, Dr. Yu is an Oculoplastic Surgeon and her non-profit, Project Theia, helps those in need by addressing facial reconstruction and eye-related issues. Clinica Esperanza was started on the island of Roatán in 2001 by a nurse named Peggy Stranges who is originally from Columbus, Ohio. Clinica Esperanza is supported by two of BBF's existing partners, Food for the Poor based in Florida and CEPUDO in Honduras.

Upon her return to Pittsburgh, Jenny called me to talk about the trip and also discuss other potential projects. She then very kindly introduced Dr. Paul Kang, who is a cornea, cataract, and refractive surgeon in the Washington DC area, and was in Roatán with her as part of the Health-in-Sight mission.

Dr. Kang had purchased and donated a parcel of land to Clinica Esperanza that is adjacent to the clinic. His idea was to build a sustainable eye clinic in Roatán in conjunction with the Health-in-Sight Mission and help others there and around the world, in a long-term sustainable manner. Health-in-Sight Mission established an eye clinic within Clinica Esperanza, and the proposed surgical clinic would complement the work that they do. Given their extensive involvement with CEPUDO in Honduras and long-term relationship and support of Clinica Esperanza, we then scheduled a call with Food for the Poor to explore the idea of building the facility on the island. After many more discussions, the idea for the clinic started taking shape as follows:



The Concept and Operational Model: Broadly speaking, the idea is to set up a multi-tiered pricing structure eye clinic in Roatán which would work in conjunction with Clinica Esperanza. The goal of the facility is to provide free or low-cost services to the in-need population on the island and hopefully build more such clinical facilities. The clinic will also hire a local physician and support staff members and specialized groups, such as Project Theia, would also come and perform their services for the underprivileged.

The working capital for the clinic would be derived from:

- Charging fees for service to expatriates and cruise ship passengers to offset free or low-cost services to those who cannot afford them the aforementioned multi-tiered pricing model.
- Setting up a teaching / training facility for local medical students.
- Having a program where physicians from around the world come and perform services for free but may actually pay for the experience. In this case, their families could also stay on the tourist side of island while the physicians perform these surgeries.
- Funding from an ongoing foundation grant and additional fundraising activities; even though the financial model actually makes the clinic sustainable without the support of additional grant money.
- Dr. Kang is the co-founder of the Vanguard Ophthalmology Society which would have events such as conferences at the facility, thus bringing in revenue.

BBF would provide any supplies and equipment as necessary as in the normal course of our support activities. A solar power system would be an ideal addition to the project.

Current Project Status: Though actual implementation has been somewhat delayed by COVID-19, the discussions to implement the project continue in earnest. Dr. Kang already has modern, cutting edge equipment that has been donated to him to completely equip the clinic. He also has corporate pharmaceutical company support for the needed ophthalmic supplies.



Given the robustness of the sustainable model presented, Food for the Poor has agreed to fund the construction of the physical facility which would include a 10,000 sq. ft. clinic. A prominent architect friend of Dr. Kang's has drawn up the plans pro-bono and CEPUDO, with expertise in construction on the island and staff on the ground, will coordinate the planning and subsequent construction. The original plot of land adjacent to Clinica Esperanza that was donated by Dr. Kang, will now be used for expanding the clinic's radiology facilities and the municipal government on the island will provide land for the new eye care clinic. This will make it more accessible to local community members and adjacent to an up and coming hospital.

The Road Ahead: I hope the overview provided above gives the reader a feel for the different parties and issues involved in bringing about such a project. The idea of a sustainable clinic in the form of Dr. Kang's proposal certainly seems to be an attractive development proposition. So much so that we have had discussions about additional clinics in other locations. When I asked Paul (Dr. Kang) if he would consider Jamaica for another clinic down the road, his answer was an immediate yes. In fact, ideally, this clinic would be the first of many to help the underserved wherever we could build the facilities. Jenny (Dr. Yu) too is completely supportive and would be willing to work in her surgery efforts within the context of such clinics. We are positive that this attitude will extend to so many others with whom BBF works on an ongoing basis.

Epilogue: As I sit here having just gotten off a call with an anesthesiologist who would like to work with BBF to provide oxygen generators to those in dire need in developing countries, and intends to fund the cause through his peer group, the recurring thought that comes to mind is that these ideas can only come to fruition through the efforts of dedicated and caring people that surround us in every form. Through the altered prism of our current challenges, we still see altruism, ingenuity, and generosity abound - perhaps most clearly, through you, without whom none of this work would be possible.

Thank you as always. We hope to bring to you more stories of our work ahead, and indeed, those of sustainable development.