

Sustainability and the Challenges Facing Future Leaders in Humanitarian Hearing Healthcare

A Perspective from a bilingual graduate student clinician

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Arizona Sonora Border Projects for Inclusion

- ARSOBO
 - Began in 2008
 - In partnership with the University of Arizona
- Mission
 - “Assist in alleviating physical, psychological, and economic barriers faced by individuals with disabilities by providing high-tech, low-cost medical devices that minimize their disability and maximize their economic and social contribution to society.”



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“It’s not what you bring, it’s what you leave behind.”

- Best Practices
 - What do we normally think of when we hear this term?
 - What we do when we are there.
 - Let us think beyond a rigid definition of best practices
 - Our mission has less to do with what we bring, and more to do with what we leave behind.



What I Bring





Our Adopted Model of Care

- Culture of Health Action Framework
 - Making health a shared value
 - Fostering cross-sector collaboration
 - Creating healthier, more equitable communities
 - Strengthening integration of health services and systems
 - Outcome: improved population health, well-being, and EquityAction area



(Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2019)

What They Bring

- Dedicated team of cross-border volunteers
- Interpreters
- Access to resources
- Clinical facility



Pablo

- Local full-time Audiology technician
- Networking in local community
 - Manitas Que Hablan
- Background
 - Family history of hearing loss
 - Mother learned sign language to communicate with her daughter
 - Founder of Manitas Que Hablan, now a school for the Deaf
 - Fluent in Mexican Sign Language



What We Wish We Could Bring

- More time
- More experience
 - In unideal clinical environments
- Consistent source of supplies
 - Sani-wipes
 - Retention Accessories (CrittterClips)
 - Domes
 - Thin tubes





Challenges

- Binaural fittings not always feasible
 - We do not fit adults binaurally, unless attending school
 - Strategy for binaural amplification in children
- Limited flexibility in molds
 - Types that can be fit
- Do not perform Real-Ear measures
 - Fast-paced
 - Time limitation
- Transportation of equipment across the border
- Paper records

How is this Sustainable?

- Let us consider what is important for an entity to do this work.
 - Any suggestions?





What We Leave Behind

- Foundation for success
 - For student clinicians
 - Community volunteers
 - Patients
- Trust
- Relationships
 - Facilitated by our monthly visits
- Knowledge
 - Family resources
 - Volunteering alongside our cross-border colleagues
 - Learning goes both ways
 - Training
 - Leads to empowerment

What We Leave With

- More experience
 - Clinical readiness
 - Confidence to implement new techniques and the opportunity to practice them the following month
- A sense of community
- Perspective
 - Conditions are not the same on either side of the border, but we share the same concerns and values.
- An earnest contribution to health equity





Thank You!

References

- ARSOBO - Arizona Sonora Border - Projects For Inclusion. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://arsobo.org/>.
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