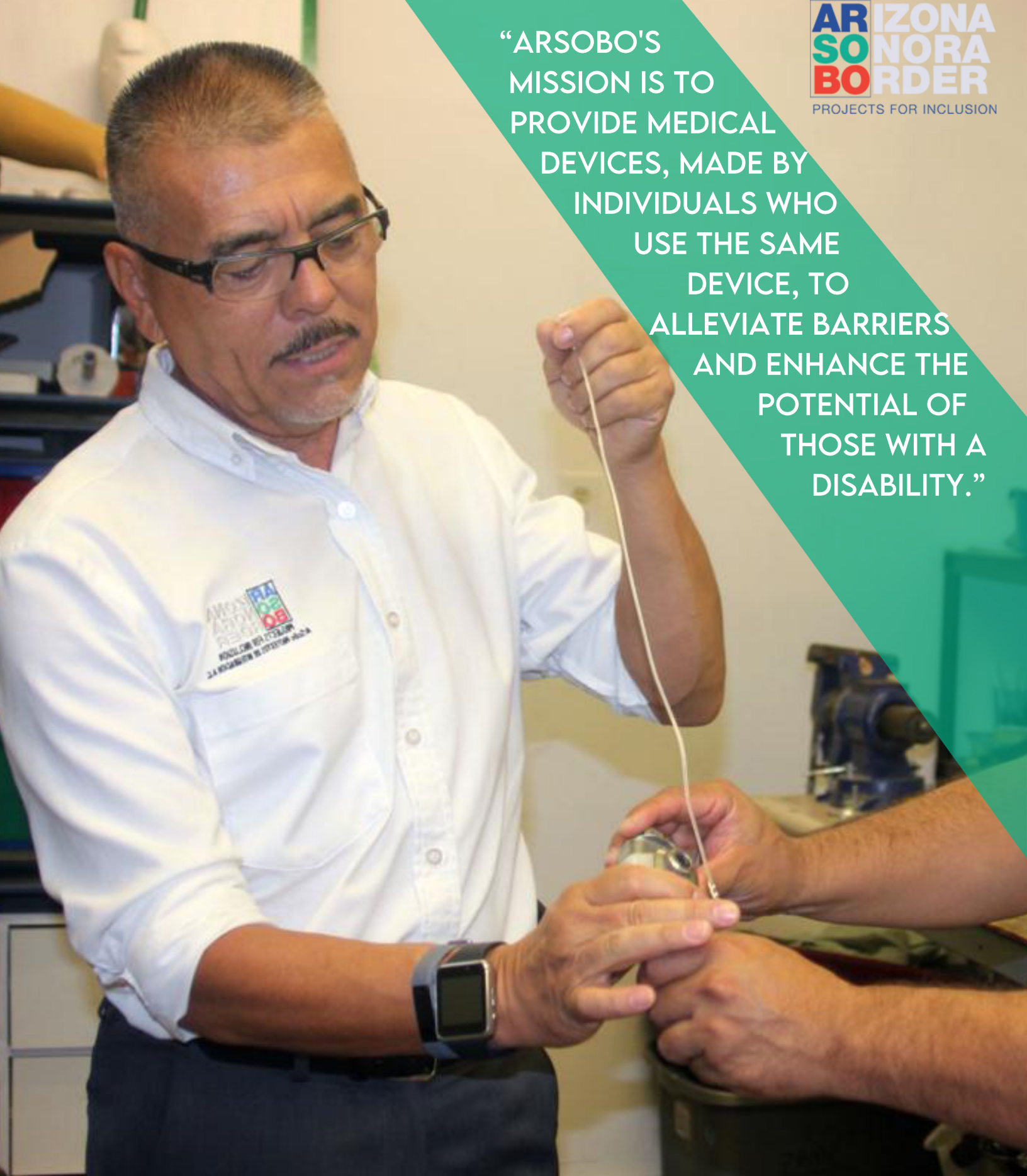


“ARSOBO'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE MEDICAL DEVICES, MADE BY INDIVIDUALS WHO USE THE SAME DEVICE, TO ALLEVIATE BARRIERS AND ENHANCE THE POTENTIAL OF THOSE WITH A DISABILITY.”



SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROFILE: FRANCISCO “KIKO” TRUJILLO

Name Francisco J. Trujillo

Position Founder of Arizona Sonora Border Projects for Inclusion (ARSOBO); Resource Manager of ARSOBO in Mexico

What is ARSOBO'S purpose? Millions of people in Mexico are unable to provide for their families because the government only takes care of amputations, they don't provide other devices needed for quality of life, such as wheelchairs and prosthetics. ARSOBO was created to help tackle that problem.

"Our primary purpose involved three programs that are designed to provide medical devices at a low cost for people with a motor or auditory disability." Francisco explained

The three programs he mentioned involve creating and supplying wheelchairs, prosthetics/orthotics, and hearing aids for those in need.

"What's in a name:" While it's called ARSOBO for short, the full name of the organization is Arizona Sonora Border Projects of Integration. This holds true for the overall purpose of ARSOBO, which is to provide people with the medical devices they need to integrate into everyday life using resources from both Arizona and Sonora.

Within ARSOBO, Francisco supervises 14 people, each with a disability, manages ARSOBO's resources, and occasionally tinkers with device designs, one example being Whirlwind International's wheelchairs.

What's your relationship to Nogales?

"I'm native to the community. I studied Industrial Engineering at the local university and spent 15 years working for the maquiladora industry. This relationship helped me start a program about two years ago to help employ people with disabilities."

Francisco's connection to Nogales led to other opportunities as well. After ending his time at the maquiladora, he began to work with different organizations in Tucson and Ambos Nogales.

Through a series of connections he eventually met Dr. Duncan, a University of Arizona Public Health Faculty member. Together after a conference on disabilities in Nogales, they were able to found ARSOBO.

What do you love most about working with ARSOBO?

Francisco talks a bit about his background and how working at a maquiladora wasn't fulfilling. Talking about ARSOBO though, he brightens up, revealing the satisfaction he gains from being able to help others and employ his creativity.

"I think everything." He explains. "One aspect is that as an industrial engineer, I'm employing what I studied. Another aspect is that working with mothers and kids with disabilities is very beautiful... I'm doing something that fills me up as a person. Mainly, I love working with people and I love the binational relationship we've been able to create with U.S organizations."

What's an average day at ARSOBO?

"No two similar days exist because the people who come by all have different needs. There are no two people who have similar physical, emotional, or economic situations."

Francisco helped found ARSOBO in 2009 and it's been growing strong ever since. While there have been many changes in the past few months, especially due to the new challenges presented by COVID-19, ARSOBO is still open to the community. And Francisco remains optimistic. He smiles. "Little by little, we've made a name for ourselves that inspires confidence within the community."

What does social investment mean to you?

"I see social investment as a sustainable economic activity whose purpose is to produce goods that people from our most vulnerable sectors need and who can acquire them directly at a just price."

If you would like to donate to cross-border social projects (NGOs) in the FESAC-BCA borderlands network, please visit our website at www.bordercommunityalliance.org/donate or give us a call at **(520) 398-3229**