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R E P O R T

Q&A with Thierry Daher, Sustainable Cabarete Co-founder & CMO

Principal Series:

While COVID-19 still dominates headlines, another kind of pandemic is threatening the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world — food insecurity.

The two are very much intertwined, as frontiers and economies shutdowns are directly impacting the ability of the developing world to feed itself. By the end of 2020, authorities estimate that upwards of 265 million people could be on the brink of starvation globally, almost double the current rate of crisis-level food insecurity in the world.

Yet in Cabarete, a small beautiful beach town on the North Coast of the Dominican Republic, a group of locals and expats have already responded with speed and efficiency to the crisis and are trying to create a repeatable sustainable model to share with the world before the hunger pandemic spreads.

Cabarete sits on the North Coast of the Dominican Republic, the most visited island in the Caribbean. Home to a population of over 25,000 people, locals primarily make their living off of tourism. Cabarete now experiences an 80% unemployment rate as the shutdown of national borders on March 18th left no tourism to subsidize for an indefinite amount of time. As a result, the reality of a food shortage has emerged for about 10,000 inhabitants as early as last April.

Cabarete Sostenible (Sustainable Cabarete) was born 5 weeks ago as an attempt to create a rapid crisis response and to deploy a repeatable sustainable solution to this type of crisis allowing populations to feed themselves now and later. Cabarete Sostenible is a coalition of local NGOs, community leaders, food providers, volunteers and startup entrepreneurs striving to:

1) short term, provide for nutritious food sourcing and distribution to the neediest families at a record-low cost (\$4/person/week). This effort was started over 4 weeks ago feeding 1,600+ people per week and counting.

2) mid-term, aim to develop permaculture design and the immediate implantation of shade houses, seed banks and large-scale farming. This provides the local population the means to feed itself moving forward. This effort was started 3 weeks ago on donated land. It is already yielding initial food supplies.

3) In the mid-to-long term, we aim to create a repeatable, adaptable and scalable model to save communities from starvation but also enable them to feed themselves sustainably A model that can be shared and improved in an open source manner across the world.

– Current funding is ensured via a successful online donation campaign (via a US 503.c NGO) on www.cabaretesostenible.org

– All financials are transparent, independently audited and 100% of monies donated go toward the food supply programs.

– Everyone on the ground is freely donating time, money, work and expertise

A documentary film project is being developed right now to document the above process and the involvement of strategic partners over the next 6 months. The film will release early in 2021.

Watch video: <https://www.cabaretesostenible.org/>



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What major problem is Cabarete Sostenible tackling?

By the end of 2020, authorities estimate that upwards of 265 million people could be on the brink of starvation globally, almost double the current rate of crisis-level food insecurity, pushed into a crisis situation as a result of the COVID19 economic consequences.

The fourth annual Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC 2020) demonstrates the growing scale of the current situation, as well as its intense concentration in just 55 countries around the globe. The report looks at the prevalence of acute food insecurity, which has severe impacts on lives, livelihoods, or both.

Cabarete Sostenible aims to create a social and economic model to solve this type of crisis, before it becomes a global pandemic - and to create the farming infrastructure so locals can feed themselves in the long run. By running two parallel tracks (short term and mid-term) and designing an innovative public-private partnership with the active involvement of the local and expats business communities Cabarete Sostenible aims to prevent food shortages from becoming famines and return dignity and pride to local communities.

By involving international partners and financiers our goal is to make the model scalable and adaptable and share it with numerous communities in need across the world.

How does your model work and what makes it efficient?

The Cabarete Sostenible model is to be understood as a pilot-program to answer urgent humanitarian food crisis, while giving impacted communities the means to feed themselves in the future in a sustainable way.

- in the short term food-providers partnerships, local and expats volunteers and online fundraising enables the sourcing, creation and distribution of highly nutritive ration packs for a record low price (currently below \$4 feeds a person for a week). This takes care of the urgent food needs, avoids social unrests and mobilizes the population.

- in parallel, on donated fields, community lands and at home, volunteers develop and teach community gardening, permaculture, the implantation of shade houses, the constitution of seed banks and larger-scale farming. Instruction videos and programs are created to transfer know-how to the population.

- The creation of this knowledge bank provides the population with the means to feed itself moving forward, yet also starts accruing a database of instruction videos and tutorials which can then be shared immediately with other communities worldwide.

So far, the model is working better than anticipated with over 1,600 people being fed on an ongoing basis for the last 4 weeks and fundraising providing 2 to 3 weeks of visibility - at current needs level. Yet we anticipate a rapid expansion of the needs to reach 10,000 local people quickly and we are therefore stepping up our fundraising efforts, including a search of one or several corporate/financial partners who can take this to the next level.

Is your model capable of scaling globally?

We believe so. And this is why:

- much of the knowledge needed to implement the program is Internet based (website, online videos, tutorials, techniques...), extremely low cost, and can be put together in a matter of days or even hours in any community worldwide.

- the need exists and will grow in the next two years to help communities ANTICIPATE food crisis and deploy a local partnership model that avoids famines before they actually happen, which would potentially hurt all local businesses and populations by destroying economic infrastructures.

- the model empowers local communities to create sustainable food infrastructures for the mid and long term, taking care of future food crisis by giving the population the means and infrastructure to feed itself without relying on outside help when disasters strike.

- in addition to local businesses, elected officials and volunteers on the ground we are a small group of seasoned entrepreneurs from the US, the EU and Canada, lending our time and know-how of fast growing and agile startup environments, to creating this new humanitarian relief model. The successful results so far include two-digits conversion rates on our donation pages and dozens of volunteers applying every day.

- because everyone works as a volunteer there is a \$0 infrastructure cost so far. 100% of donations received go toward food programs.

This is much more efficient than any alternative of sending food-aid from overseas

into already devastated communities, which may never recover economically. As we move further into field-testing and fine tuning our model, we hope to improve it to make it fully repeatable and scalable anywhere in the world.



Thierry Daher, Sustainable Cabarete

Thierry Daher is a startup founder, an award-winning filmmaker, and a serial marketer.

Thierry currently serves as the cofounder and CMO of Cabarete Sostenible. He is also the Founder and CEO of Positive Solutions, a positive-content marketing agency serving exclusively brands and projects that have a clear and measurable positive impact on people and/or on our planet.

With 25+ years' experience in serving the digital marketing and brand content needs of leading brands (Disney Parks, Lands' End, Macy's, Bic, Adidas, Mattel, Nike, Pfizer, among others), creating multiple tech startups, and producing & distributing award-winning documentary films, Thierry now impulses his creativity and energy through Positive Solutions – aiming to make the world a better place, one day, one company, one program at a time. For more info at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/thierrydaher/>

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Affected individuals include members, non-members, guests, general population and staff who exhibit Coronavirus symptoms (including but not limited to fever, cough and shortness of breath), may have been exposed to the Coronavirus, or who have recently traveled to countries affected by the Coronavirus. Limiting exposure may include self-quarantining, avoiding common areas, and limiting close contact with others as much as possible.

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