



ASAL
International

GROWING KINGDOM BUSINESSES TOGETHER

BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE *(Leland Ulrich, Founder & CEO Emeritus)*

Assessing the Health of Sustainable Kingdom Communities

IN PREVIOUS newsletters, I introduced the seven pillars of Sustainable Kingdom Communities and explored how each pillar strengthens and supports the others. No single pillar stands alone. Each is essential, and each depends on the health of the whole. In this new series, we turn toward a practical question: How do we assess the health of our community through these seven pillars—and how do we do so in a way that builds rather than divides?

Assessment, when handled improperly, can become a weapon. It can be used to elevate one pillar, diminish another pillar, or justify hidden agendas. That is not its purpose. A Kingdom-centered assessment is not about comparison or competition—it is about clarity, alignment, and stewardship.

One of the ongoing challenges within any community structure is the natural tendency for leaders to prioritize the pillar they are called to serve. At times, this may show up as neglect of the other pillars. At other times, it appears as a subtle belief that one's own pillar is the most essential. This tendency is understandable. Leaders feel a deep sense of calling toward their specific area of service. That

calling brings passion, conviction, and personal fulfillment.

The problem does not begin with calling. It begins when identity becomes fused with calling.

Faithful leaders understand that they are stewards, not owners. They are entrusted with gifts and talents to serve the greater whole.

When leadership flows from a heart of service, each pillar asks, "How can we strengthen the others?" rather than "How can the others strengthen us?"

That posture is where true community is formed.

When leaders shift from serving the whole to protecting their own domain, health declines quickly. Energy becomes territorial. Collaboration weakens. Trust erodes. Ironically, the very thing leaders are trying to build begins to fracture. There is no room for selfish ambition in God's

Kingdom. Sustainable Kingdom Communities require humility, interdependence, and a shared commitment to something larger than personal fulfillment.

This assessment process is designed to examine two realities simultaneously: the health of each component within every pillar, and the health of both those leading and those being



Assessing the Health... continued p. 2

led. Structures matter. Systems matter. But hearts and relationships matter just as much.

The process itself is simple, though it requires intentional preparation. Because assessment can be subjective, clarity about participation is essential. We recommend that all leaders within the seven pillars participate, along with a thoughtful sampling of those they serve. A community cannot be accurately assessed from the top alone. The perspective of those experiencing the day-to-day culture is invaluable.

Once the survey is completed, transparency becomes the next act of stewardship. Results should be made publicly available to participants while preserving individual anonymity. This maintains trust while honoring confidentiality. Transparency prevents suspicion and reinforces the collective nature of the work.

After results are shared, a public gathering of participants should follow. This meeting is not for defensiveness or explanation; it is for listening, reflection, and alignment. The findings should be summarized by pillar, and attention should be given to the relationships between pillars. Often, the most important insights are not found within a single pillar but in the gaps between them.

From there, the community prayerfully identifies areas of improvement and commits to specific goals. These commitments become shared objectives—clear, agreed-upon outcomes the community will pursue together while faithfully living daily life. This step transforms information into direction. Without shared commitment, assessment remains data. With commitment, it becomes momentum.

A timeline for reconvening should be established at the outset. Progress must be revisited, measured, and reflected upon. Each reconvening moment provides an opportunity to realign priorities, celebrate growth, and address areas that require renewed attention. Over time, this rhythm becomes part of the community's culture.

This process serves as both a birthing and rebirthing mechanism. Communities that never evaluate themselves gradually fossilize. They become rigid, stagnant, and eventually ineffective. Healthy assessment keeps vision fresh, mission aligned, and core values embodied rather than merely stated. It ensures that behaviors and lived experiences match the ideals professed.

One final note is essential. For this process to bear lasting fruit, it must be grounded in Truth—God's Truth as revealed in Scripture. The ultimate standard is not personal preference, cultural trends, or organizational efficiency. It is a shared commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and obedience to His teachings. Without that foundation, assessment becomes opinion. With that foundation, it becomes discipleship.

When Sustainable Kingdom Communities regularly examine themselves in humility, anchored in biblical truth and motivated by love, they position themselves for long-term health and Kingdom impact.

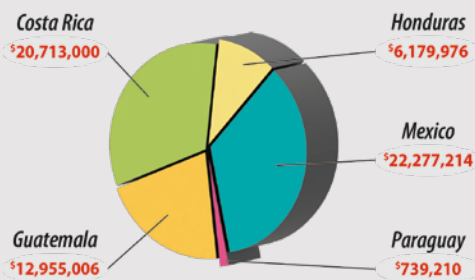
Assessment, done rightly, is not a threat. It is an act of faithfulness.



For Facilitators Guide & Assessment Survey, Call: 817-835-6001 or Scan this QR code:

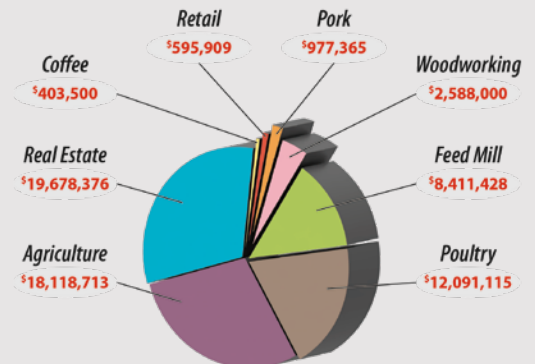


LOAN PORTFOLIO BY COUNTRY



ASAL Loan Portfolio:
March 31, 2026

LOAN PORTFOLIO BY INDUSTRY



NUTRI-ALBA

Calderón family, El Edén, Guatemala

TESTIMONIAL
from the Field

FIFTY YEARS ago in the rural community of El Edén, in the highlands of western Guatemala, a young father named Ramiro Calderón began offering basic veterinary services to his neighbors. With little formal education and limited resources, he nevertheless became a trusted figure among local farmers.

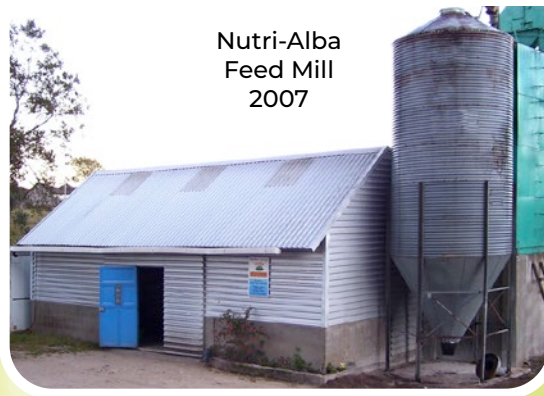
Traveling on horseback through harsh conditions—heat, rain, mud, and long nights—Ramiro cared for sick animals with dedication and perseverance. Though his supplies were minimal, he continually sought better medicines and knowledge, earning a reputation for skill, sacrifice, and genuine care for his community.

As roads improved and vehicles became available, Ramiro was able to extend his reach. However, after years of tireless work, declining health eventually forced him to retire from veterinary service.

Ramiro's love for animals and his dedicated desire to serve and help others inspired his children to continue his legacy. In 2005, they founded what is now known as Nutri-Alba. Starting in a small, repurposed building with simple tools, Ramiro's sons and sons-in-law began producing hog feed to meet their own needs and those of nearby farmers. Initially mixed by hand with a shovel, production soon scaled with the addition of a 300 pound mixer (and later a 1,000 pound mixer), allowing them to supply feed to the public.

Alongside feed production, the company began distributing high-quality veterinary products, continuing Ramiro's mission of supporting animal health in the region.

Over time, Nutri-Alba continued its goal of supporting more producers in the region and providing employment in the community. Product lines expanded to include feed for cattle, poultry,



Nutri-Alba
Feed Mill
2007

horses, sheep, and goats, as well as a broader range of veterinary supplies and farm equipment. Facility upgrades, including additional buildings and storage silos, allowed the company to reduce costs and offer better prices.

In 2020, modernization efforts brought a one-ton mixer and improved handling systems, increasing production capacity to 25 tons per day. Further expansion in 2025 included a new facility for storage, sales, and offices. Thanks to ASAL's support, feed storage space was quadrupled, a loading dock was added, and overall efficiency improved, enhancing both product availability and customer service. A larger and more comfortable sales room now allows for better customer service and a wider selection of veterinary products.

Today, Ramiro's legacy continues through five of his children, their spouses, and several grandchildren. Together, they remain committed to providing high-quality animal nutrition and health products with humble and attentive service to all their customers.

Beyond business, the family has supported members of their Mennonite church (of which they were some of the first members) as well as many others in the local community. By offering affordable feed, farm supplies, and technical guidance, they have helped local families start, improve, and expand their agricultural operations. They also help local growers develop new products and markets to provide better opportunities for farming in the Guatemalan highlands.

Their mission extends beyond economic support. The Calderón family seeks to reflect God's truth and grace in their work, contributing not only to the economic success of those they serve but also to their spiritual well-being.

Nutri-Alba Feed



Nutri-Alba Sales Room/Veterinary Store



Why Business Growth Requires Personal Transformation

Keiner Barrantes, Regional Officer, Honduras

WHILE THE typical entrepreneurial focus is on market size, product-market fit, and growth potential, those who approach their work with a view of eternal truth see the entrepreneur, not the business, as the most critical “product” being developed. The extreme pressures of growing a business are profoundly transformative, serving to refine character, eliminate poor habits, and necessitate a re-evaluation of one’s identity and core purpose.

The Mirror of Leadership

A business rarely grows beyond the capacity of its leader. If an entrepreneur struggles with procrastination, the business will struggle to meet deadlines. If the leader lacks emotional regulation, it will result in a culture of instability. Entrepreneurship demands that we leave behind the “old self”—characterized by undisciplined habits and self-centered motivations—and put on a “new self” built on principles of discipline, resilience, and skill, that ultimately mirrors the image of Christ.

Leadership isn’t just a process about “professional development”—it is about **integral growth**. Effective and integral administration is not a switch one flips on only during office hours. It is a mantle of virtue that governs how a man treats his wife, how he raises his children, and how he serves his local church. The “efficient and honest administration” of a company is the tangible evidence of a moral compass aligned with universal truths.

ASAL: A Greenhouse for Kingdom Men

In my own journey, working for **ASAL** has provided a unique vantage point to witness transformation. ASAL does not merely view its clients as loan recipients—borrowers who can do whatever they wish with the funds as long as they pay them back. Instead, ASAL communicates high expectations. Its clients are expected to be men of integrity, committed to the personal growth necessary to successfully lead a kingdom enterprise. By providing the financial enablement for men to enter the world

of entrepreneurship, ASAL often places them in a position where they must learn important truths to survive and thrive. Here the coaching from ASAL becomes a real asset.

The financial support and coaching provided by ASAL acts as a catalyst for a much deeper investment. It pushes Christian men toward an integral growth that challenges their very identity. In the face of financial risk and operational complexity, a man is forced to move beyond a “worker” mindset and embrace a “steward” identity—one based on the eternal truth that everything we manage belongs to the Creator, and we are here for His glory.

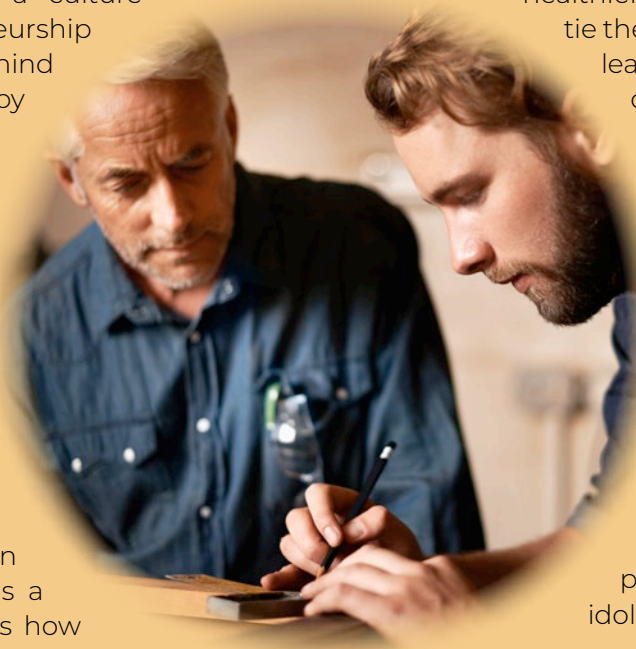
A Healthy Identity Based on Truth

Often, the ultimate fruit of growth is a “healthier identity.” Many entrepreneurs tie their worth to their profit margins, leading to pride in success and despair in failure. However, a growth path rooted in Christian values anchors identity in Christ. And a healthier Christian identity translates into:

- **Higher Moral Behavior:** Honesty becomes a non-negotiable standard rather than a strategic convenience.
- **Richer Family Life:** The business becomes a means to provide and lead, rather than an idol that steals the father’s heart.
- **Richer Church Life:** The resources and skills gained in the marketplace are cycled back into the church community in the form of richer and more mature perspectives on daily life and fellowship.

Conclusion

Growing a business is one of the most effective sanctification tools available to a man. It exposes every weakness and rewards every virtue. Organizations like ASAL are crucial because they don’t just fund companies; they empower men to become who God meant them to be. When a man grows in discipline, skill, and moral clarity, the business he builds becomes more than a commercial entity—it becomes a testament to the transformative power of living by the Truth.





From the **BLAME-SHAME-GAME** to

NAME IT-LEARN IT-SOLVE IT!

EVERY ORGANIZATION eventually faces a moment when something goes wrong—a missed deadline, a disappointing launch, a financial gap, or a team conflict that surfaces at the worst possible time. In those moments, culture is not created—it is revealed.

The real question is never whether problems will occur. They will. The question is how we respond when they do. Do we instinctively search for someone to blame? Or do we steady ourselves and search for something to build?

High-performing organizations understand a critical truth: blame weakens teams, but ownership strengthens them. The fastest path forward is not fault-finding—it is clarity.

A simple leadership rhythm turns setbacks into momentum: **name the problem, learn from it, then solve it.**

The first move is to name the problem without naming a villain. Blame is emotional. Naming is objective. Blame asks, “*Who dropped the ball?*” Naming asks, “*What actually happened?*” Blame personalizes failure and escalates defensiveness. Naming neutralizes emotion and grounds the conversation in facts.

When leaders calmly define an issue using observable, measurable language, they create psychological safety. And safety is the soil where solutions grow. Instead of saying, “*The sales team failed to close,*” a leader might say, “*Our close rate dropped from 38% to 22% this quarter.*” Instead of, “*Operations messed this up,*” try, “*We experienced three fulfillment delays due to process gaps.*”

Clarity removes drama, and drama is expensive. A practical discipline is to write the problem in one sentence using only measurable facts. If it cannot be measured, it likely cannot yet be solved.

Once the issue is clearly defined, the next step is to extract the learning before rushing toward a fix. Many teams skip this critical phase. They move quickly to patch the visible symptom without mining the deeper lesson. Yet every problem carries data. Every setback carries instruction.

Leaders should slow down the room and ask better questions. *What assumptions proved inaccurate? What did we overlook? Which system failed? What skill gap was exposed? Were there early warning signs we ignored?* When teams feel safe enough to answer honestly, failure becomes tuition rather than trauma. Organizations that learn faster consistently outperform organizations that defend harder.

Only after the learning is clear should the solve be designed. And strong solutions share three characteristics. They address root causes rather than surface symptoms. They are assigned to a clearly responsible owner. And they include a measurable checkpoint. Without ownership, solutions drift. Without measurement, they fade. Without accountability, they die quietly.

Vague intentions such as “*We need better communication*” rarely produce change. Specific commitments do. “*We will implement a 15-minute daily cross-team alignment call for the next 30 days, owned by Operations,*” creates movement. Specificity builds momentum

because it replaces emotion with structure.

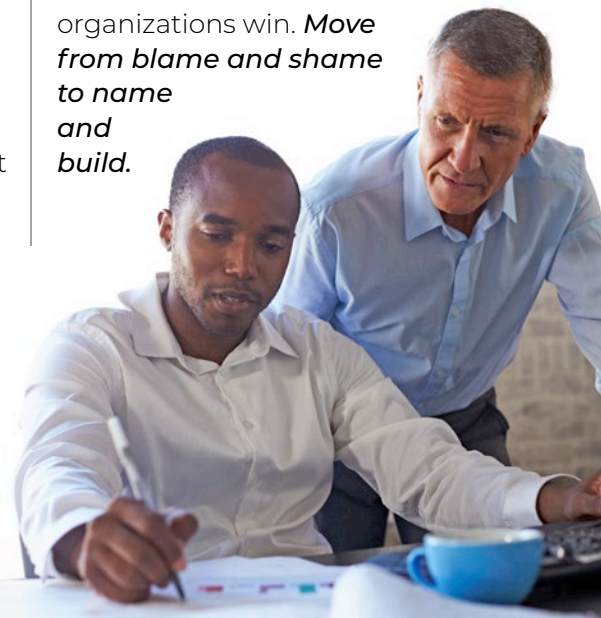
This shift matters more than many leaders realize. Blame breeds fear. Fear breeds silence. Silence suffocates innovation. But when a team consistently practices a rhythm of naming the issue, learning from it, and solving it structurally, something powerful happens. Emotional safety increases. Adaptation speeds up. Collaboration strengthens. Trust deepens. Growth becomes sustainable rather than reactive.

The most mature organizations are not those that avoid problems. They are those that metabolize them well.

The next time something goes sideways, pause before reacting. Ask yourself whether you are searching for a culprit or for clarity. Ensure the learning has been extracted before jumping to action. Evaluate whether the proposed solution is structural or merely emotional relief. Confirm that ownership and measurement are clearly defined.

Culture is shaped in moments of pressure. Leaders set the tone in those moments.

This is how resilient organizations win. **Move from blame and shame to name and build.**





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ASAL Spring 2026 Newsletter



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