“We want to support projects that are sustainable, and into the agenda of social development versus charity.”
**Name**
Alma Cota de Yáñez

**Position**
Executive Director at Fundación del Empresariado Sonorense (FESAC)

**"What's in a name"**
FESAC represents the Fundación del Empresariado Sonorense. (Translation: the foundation of Sonoran businesses.) FESAC is rooted in the southern tip of Nogales, Sonora. Within the walls of the tiny office, FESAC directors and employees seek potential donors who can invest in non-profit organizations. Think of it as a relay race: FESAC takes the baton from one runner and figures out the most responsible, efficient, and ethical way to transfer it to the next runner.

**What brought you to Nogales?**
“Alma moved to Nogales in 2000 when her husband was employed by Motorola. At the time, maquila factories were the leading industry in Mexican border towns like Nogales, Sonora, hiring thousands of workers at a time. Today, maquilas are still the push behind the thriving economy and population growth in Nogales, Sonora.

“My mother was like, ‘Oh, I’m so sorry. You have to live in Nogales.’ Nogales, Tijuana, Juarez, Matamoros, San Luis Río Colorado, Agua Prieta,” Alma said, rattling off the list of Mexico’s border towns. “My dad used to say they are the ugliest cities in the country.”

But before long, Alma was swept up in the community of Nogales. She organized book clubs, began reading childrens’ stories on the radio, and finally crossed paths with FESAC, where she’s worked for the past 16 years.”

**An average day in FESAC**
“Alma acts as the link between donors and community organizations. She sits down with business owners to discuss how they can socially invest in a Nogales non-profit. But it’s not about throwing money at a cause. Instead, Alma explains to donors how their investment will help everyone: less poverty leads to less crime, less violence, and more economic flow.

“You’re a businessman, you want to say community,” Alma explained.
On other days, Alma’s working with the non-profits themselves: shelters, food banks, foster care systems, or sewing schools, to figure out how funds can best be distributed toward each cause. Often, she places an emphasis on providing employment, education, and opportunities in Nogales: not just funds.

“It’s been fun, because we work with the grassroot groups, and then you go into an office of someone who would write a $50,000 check without checking their balance,” Alma explained. “So you literally move all over the community.”

“I have an issue with ‘helping,’ because it means we know more, we have more resources and, ‘You poor little thing. We will help you,’” Alma explained. “What we really want to do ... is this social investment concept.”

For Alma, and for FESAC, social investment means providing tools for growth. For example, when FESAC works with the food bank of Nogales, the organization doesn’t just provide funds for more food. FESAC also helped establish a vegetable garden, and classes for children to learn how to plant their own food. Now, the bank provides more than food: it provides an opportunity for new skills, tools, and experiences within the Nogales community.