

People Helping People Annual Report 2017–2018 Cuso International 2017–2018 Annual Report ISSN 2561-7362

Cuso International is a not-for-profit development organization that works to eradicate poverty and inequality through the efforts of highly skilled volunteers, collaborative partnerships and compassionate donors. Established in 1961, Cuso International is a registered charity in Canada and the United States. Funds raised have enabled more than 15,000 Canadian volunteer placements around the world.

Cuso International is a registered charitable organization in Canada. No. 81111 6813 RR0001



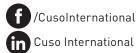
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This report is also available in French and Spanish. Ce bulletin est également disponible en anglais et espagnol. Este informe también está disponible en francés y en inglés.

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On the cover: Rahel waits for her aunt outside Pawe General Hospital in Adama, Ethiopia. The hospital is one of the many Cuso International healthcare partners with whom we work.

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## **Realizing a Powerful Vision**

#### **Our Vision**

Our vision includes a world where all people are able to realize their potential, develop their skills and participate fully in society.

#### **Our Mission**

Reduce poverty and inequality through the efforts of volunteers, partners and donors.

#### **Our Values**

Partnership: We believe in the power of people. We employ a people-centred approach to development and the challenge of overcoming poverty and inequality.

Respect and Integrity: We value diversity. We recognize and care about the rights and dignity of others.

Accountability: We proactively demonstrate that we work with and on behalf of others. We seek to achieve and inspire excellence.

## Leadership Message

A t Cuso International, our work is based on a simple but powerful vision: a world where all people can realize their potential, develop their skills and participate fully in society. For close to 60 years, we've advanced that vision by transforming and strengthening the ability of individuals and organizations to deliver effective and innovative solutions for people in communities around the world. Throughout, we have collaborated closely with local partners, staff, volunteers, alumni and donors to realize common objectives.

This year, together with more than 340 partners, we delivered programs that impacted communities, improving the health and livelihood of women, men and youth in 21 countries. Of note:

- In Ethiopia, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Benin our Midwives Save Lives program trained more than 900 healthcare workers and midwives, and is saving the lives of mothers and newborns.
- We galvanized support for a new Global Affairs Canada-funded initiative to tackle the deplorable practice of female genital mutilation and address gender-based violence, which is still pervasive in rural parts of Benin.
- Working with our Indigenous partner Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg, we are building a reconciliation workshop to help with the important process of reconciliation.

- Our volunteers with the Beaufort-Delta Education Council and South Slave Division Education Council in the Northwest Territories are helping improve education outcomes for Indigenous children and youth.
- Working with 45 international partners, we expanded our e-volunteering program and have close to 500 e-volunteers participating.
- Our SCOPE project (Sustainable Colombian Opportunities for Peacebuilding and Employment) has allowed 167 small business owners to hire 57 employees with formal contracts.
- Through more robust and rigorous financial management, improved systems and strengthened operational procedures, we continue to demonstrate our commitment to effective management and control.

Our alignment with the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals remains central to our work and continues to guide our priorities, as do the goals identified within Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. Our 2018–2021 strategic plan reflects this direction.

As you take the time to review this report, let's celebrate our collective efforts. The Board joins us in thanking our volunteers, alumni, donors, staff and partners for their contributions. Together we look forward to accomplishing great things in the year ahead.



Frank O'Dea Chair, Board of Directors

Glenn Mifflin

Glenn Mifflin Chief Executive Officer



## **Innovation: Thinking Globally**

A t Cuso International, we believe in building a world that works for everyone—where all human beings can reach their full potential. We've been acting on that belief for nearly 60 years. We help our partners deliver solid results to communities by improving their health and livelihoods. Together, we're advancing our mission in 21 countries across Africa, Southeast Asia, Central America, the Andean region of South America and the Caribbean, as well as Canada.

In June 2017, we launched the Cuso International Innovation Fund. The fund tests new, innovative development concepts that are affordable and easy to implement. Cuso International and its panel of reviewers chose three from the more than 40 initiatives submitted by our country program offices. Over two years, these projects will lay the groundwork for future programming as they improve the economic and social well-being of poor and marginalized communities.

#### Feeding Lima from Within

Food security is becoming an urban concern in Peru as agriculture is displaced to less fertile areas and marginalized people continue to move to the city. Feeding Lima from Within envisions urban agriculture as part of the solution. The project, which is open to farmers and their communities, gives farmers access to new markets and creates centres called agro-hubs that teach people about ecological farming. The project will train 950 urban producers with the goals of increasing their income and access to nutritious food, and reducing environmental degradation.

#### Building Climate Resilience in Women Farmers

While demand for food is increasing in Cameroon, production from small agricultural producers is shrinking. Industrialization, changing climate patterns, a high demand for land and a growing

### Peru

• Launched the Urban Agriculture Multi-Stakeholder Platform Assembly.

- Engaged 21 Carleton University e-volunteers in our food security project.
- Developed training modules for: agricultural production, community outreach/advocacy, market access and governance.

### Cameroon

• Brought women farmers together to help develop and test climate-smart technologies.

• Our partners—Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement (CED) and Cameroon Ecology—designed the project.

• Two villages will pilot climatesmart agricultural technologies and practices.

### Philippines

• Our baseline study surveyed 30 villages in three provinces.

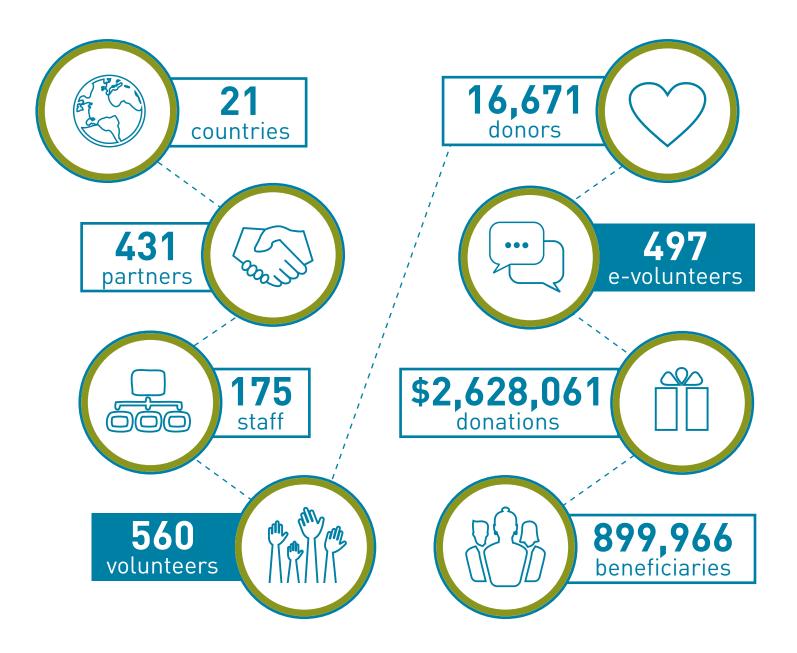
- Local Red Cross chapter volunteers helped administer a baseline questionnaire.
- Cuso International volunteers are supporting three local Red Cross chapters involved in the BRAVO project.

population are all factors that place a significant strain on the Cameroonian food supply. The challenge is worse in rural areas, where women make up 75 percent of the agriculture workforce. This project, which aligns with the Government of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, will provide female farmers with the skills to contribute more meaningfully to the agricultural value chain. It will help them become more resilient to the effects of climate change, improve food security and economic return, and narrow the productivity gap with male farmers.

#### Building Resilience and Adaptability Through Volunteer Organizations (BRAVO)

In partnership with the Philippines Red Cross and Canadian Red Cross, the BRAVO project will strengthen the recruitment and retention of disaster-relief volunteers and explore new approaches to managing a crisis. By leveraging a blend of e-volunteers, and short- and long-term volunteers, the project will improve local capacity to respond to humanitarian crises. The BRAVO team has completed its baseline study and interviewed 344 local volunteers in three provinces on Panay Island. It is using this feedback to develop processes that promote volunteer retention, management, training and livelihood activities

## By the Numbers



## **Unlocking Human Potential**

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals have ushered in a new era of development. Spearheaded by the United Nations, the goals provide a framework that Cuso International is using to build and evaluate its programs. Today, our work touches on nearly all aspects of the 17 goals, with most of our efforts focused on those concerning health and well-being, gender equality, and employment and economic growth. In 2017–2018, our global network of more than 430 partners and volunteers continued to advance our goals through several programs, one of which is our five-year Volunteers in International Cooperation and Empowerment project.

## Bolivia

### Changing mindsets

In Bolivia, we are improving the lives of the country's most vulnerable citizens, who are mostly women and girls. Our work spans several decades and our relationships with our Bolivian partners are built on a firm foundation of cooperation and trust. We're working with them to advance gender equality, foster social inclusion and promote economic empowerment. This year, we focused on defending women's rights and ending gender-based violence.

#### Ending cycles of abuse

Women and girls are less at risk of abuse when they have the skills to earn a living. Canadian development specialist and volunteer gender advisor Melissa Lavoie, and Nicaraguan volunteer social worker and feminist Yodaly Beteta are working with Cuso International partner Enda El Alto on a two-year program to promote the economic empowerment of girls and young women who are victims of abuse. Enda El Alto, which acts as a shelter, provides psychosocial support and training in areas such as sewing and cooking, allowing its clients to access paid work. The program supported 120 girls and women in its first year, with plans to reach the same number in year two. It will expand to four area high schools where Enda El Alto provides violence prevention training to 1,800 students, 40 percent of whom are female.

### Cuso International is on board. Are you?

Cuso International's new Bolivian partner, Casa de la Mujer, in Santa Cruz, launched its campaign *Yo me sumo ¿y vos?* (I'm on board, are you?) on International Women's Day 2018. As part of its long-standing efforts to fight for sexual equality and equal rights for women and girls, the campaign addresses four topics: patriarchal violence, sexual harassment, teenage pregnancy, and sexual and reproductive rights. It reached more than 100,000 people through posters, social media, radio ads and interviews, as well as in-school promotion.

## 15

partners in Bolivia and two new university partners are helping Cuso International advance gender equality, social inclusion and national volunteering programs.

11

new initiatives focused on employment, entrepreneurship, inclusive businesses, sustainable natural resource management, food security and climate change.

new Cuso International partners, Enda El Alto and Casa de la Mujer, strengthened our activities to prevent gender-based violence.

"In our workshop on sexism and gender, we were taught about violence and, above all, about love—to love ourselves and to love others, and not to harm ourselves. The most important thing I learned was that we should love ourselves and love ourselves as we are."

Ayda Mamani Chino, Age 14 El Alto, Bolivia

## **Ethiopia**

### Creating hope

Cuso International is working with Ethiopia's Department of Health to conduct research, provide training and support the country's national health plan. Our community-focused programming continues to benefit families—in particular, mothers and babies.

### Strengthening maternal and newborn health

Our highly skilled midwives, doctors and health educators are working side by side with Ethiopian health professionals in the remote and underserviced Benishangul-Gumuz Region and Bale Zone. Their efforts have helped save thousands of mothers and newborns, and advanced our goal of strengthening reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health (RMNCH). Each year, about 13,000 women and girls die from pregnancy-related complications, and more than 500,000 women and girls suffer disabilities due to complications. Our efforts have realized tangible results by improving health outcomes, while our reach has been extended through additional projects targeting nutrition and newborn health.

### Spreading proven interventions

This year, we initiated several interventions at our partner hospitals. We introduced a comprehensive maternal-health package that includes basic obstetric and newborn care, as well as essential newborn care. We developed an integrated management system for neonatal and childhood illnesses, as well as a community case management approach for childhood illnesses, which includes the treatment of neonatal sepsis. We also improved immunization coverage and improved processes for the early identification, care and treatment of sick children.

13

health workers received technical skills training to deliver high-quality RMNCH services.

# 1,120

people benefited from Cuso International's RMNCH program, including marginalized women, community health workers, midwives, nurses, men, young children and adolescents.

**3000** women of reproductive age were treated at a new gynecology

specialty clinic.

Midwife Jennica Rawstron supported the midwifery department at the Pawe Health Science College in Pawe, Ethiopia. Working alongside her counterpart Amare Kiros, Jennica helped plan and implement needs-based changes, and designed and delivered training to midwives and other professionals at the neighbouring hospital. "Cuso International placements aren't about doing the manual work, they are about teaching and aiming for sustainable change."

Jennica Rawstron Midwife, Cuso International Volunteer Pawe General Hospital

## Philippines

### Supporting business growth

Now in its second year, our Philippines program is supporting the growth and development of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. Through our partner network, we are helping business owners access the training and skills they need by supporting a culture of collaboration within their communities.

#### High-impact programs

Aid is directed to geographically remote and vulnerable areas where we work with partners to provide access to benefits such as working capital and credit, micro-insurance services, and training on entrepreneurship and product design. Since 2016, we have been active in select areas in Luzon and Visayas Islands where poverty is pervasive. This year, we expanded our partnerships from seven to 12 organizations in which women account for more than 80 percent of the entrepreneurs. Our newest partners support female micro-entrepreneurs and advocate for women's economic empowerment.

### Reimagining the marketplace for entrepreneurs

Philippine peanut farmer Alan Orais is one of the lucky ones. He and his family survived Typhoon Haiyan, but he is still rebuilding his business after the devastation it wrought. Committed to helping the community that depends on his firm's production, in 2017 Alan enrolled in a governmentrun entrepreneurship course that helps small business owners improve their entrepreneurial practices. Here, he met Cuso International volunteers and food industry professionals Marshall Bell and Tiffany Tong. They supported 30 businesses, including Alan's, during their nine-month placement. Working alongside Marshall and Tiffany, Alan benefited from a value-chain analysis, revamped his product packaging and secured new contracts. 72

micro enterprises—83 percent run by women—were trained and mentored by Cuso International volunteers.

# 1,100

farmers could benefit from Cuso International's partnership with Alboco Food Industry.

# 50%+

of our partners' beneficiaries in the Philippines are women. With our partner Trias, volunteers produced training modules on youth leadership, community health and employee evaluations.

With the knowledge gained from Cuso International volunteers, Alan Orais was able to extend the shelf-life of his products, adjust to more appropriate packaging and improve labelling for his peanut butter product. "I needed help growing my business so that I could help others in my community. I have a good product, and I wanted to find a way to make it better."

Alan Orais Philippine farmer

## Life-changing Projects

Cuso International projects are enabling our local partner organizations to deliver sustainable development results that respond to their communities' needs. Our projects in Africa and South America—YouLead, T-LED and SCOPE—are making it easier for small- and medium-sized businesses, particularly those owned by women and youth, to succeed. By strengthening capacity, our Midwives Save Lives program is ensuring midwives have access to the resources they need to provide high-quality, life-saving care.

> Chicken farmer and YouLead participant Francisca Agi, Cross River State, Nigeria.

## <u>Nigeria</u>

# 4,673

youth accessed entrepreneurial training and 690 received technical training this year, with young women accounting for 49% of trainees.

# **98%**

of participants surveyed reported their new skills were useful in achieving their goals.

# 3,000+

businesses—from farming to renewable energy—were established across 18 local government areas this year.

### Empowering youth

Cuso International's Youth Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Access and Development (YouLead) project continued to enhance youth employment and entrepreneurship in the natural resource sector in Cross River State, Nigeria. As the project heads into its fifth and final year, YouLead is active in 18 local government areas within the state. In collaboration with more than 50 local partners, the project provides young men and women with learning and training, as well as business development opportunities and financial services. Since its inception, the project has trained 9,000 youth in entrepreneurship and more than 3,000 businesses have been established and strengthened via YouLead. More than half the program's graduates are women.

### A new beginning for a young mother of four

For years, Agnes Ufarkpe Abobo didn't have the courage to venture into business. But after enrolling in YouLead's two-week entrepreneurship development training program, the young mother of four identified a business that required minimal capital—cassava farming and processing, a profitable trade for her community. Determined to make the most of her experience, Agnes competed for and won a YouLead Young Entrepreneurs Business Support Plan grant. To date, 92 women and 71 men have received funding through the initiative. In 2017, our financial service partners developed several new and enhanced youth-friendly products to support the business ventures of 19 women and 26 men.

"T-LED gave me an opportunity to participate in local and international exhibitions, which have opened more doors for me and my business and let me build networks. I want to help as many women entrepreneurs as possible. I believe we have potential to succeed."

**MACHERER** 

0

Mama Celina Chibanda Owner, Mategemeo Vegetable Supplies-CHI Products





**620** small- and medium-size enterprises benefited from T-LED this year.

89%

of T-LED clients said their knowledge of business, technical and financial skills increased.

93%

of females said they improved their negotiation skills and increased their ability to make financial-management decisions for their businesses.

2 T-LED enterprise and innovation centres are nearly complete. They will provide access to potential markets, national banks, international investors, IT, training and financial services.

### Breaking economic barriers

Cuso International's Tanzania Local Enterprise Development (T-LED) project focuses on increasing economic growth and the prosperity of women and farmers. It helps them access growth markets in the value-chains of the agribusiness and extractive sectors.

T-LED provides financial, marketing and business development services to small- and medium-size businesses through various partner organizations such as the Tanzania Women Chamber of Commerce and the Small Industries Development Organization. Gender equity is a pillar of T-LED. The program ran several workshops on women's economic empowerment and all 353 female-run T-LED businesses attended training offered by our partners.

#### Turning a passion into a paycheque

"My dream is to see my products all over Tanzania and beyond," says Mama Celina Chibanda. The 60-year-old mother of four joined T-LED when Tanzania's Small Industries Development Organization introduced her to the program. Since then, Mama Celina has successfully expanded her food operation, which employs six workers. T-LED gave her access to marketing, business management, record keeping and customer care training. As Mama Celina says, "It helped strengthen my negotiation skills." This year, she was able to attend several national and international trade events, which opened even more doors. With access to new markets, Mama Celina's customer base now extends to six cities and includes wholesale shops, supermarkets and institutions.

Despite owning a small business that distributes clothing in the cities of Buenaventura and Valle del Cauca, until recently, Leonilla Valenzuela did not have much knowledge about financial management or how to grow her business. "I used to ask my husband for money all the time and I wanted to find a way to make my own money." Through SCOPE, Leonilla was able to learn the basics, including the importance of having a bank account to manage her business finances.

Arts

## Colombia

# Because of SCOPE:

7,147

people completed vocational training and earned certificates.

**3,783** people joined the workforce.

**4**0

private sector companies have received training on gender, social inclusion, human resources and corporate social responsibility. All have signed a memorandum with Cuso International to engage in more socially inclusive human resources policy and practices.

### Sustaining communities

As people in vulnerable situations find suitable employment, their good fortune extends to their families and communities. Our partners believe inclusion has the power to make a tangible contribution to peace and reconciliation in Colombia. It was the impetus for Cuso International's SCOPE project (Sustainable Colombian Opportunities for Peacebuilding and Employment) where we're providing employment opportunities for young women and men who are living in poverty or are victims of conflict.

Together with a team of 67 local partners in eight cities, we are training Colombians on the technical and soft skills they need to succeed in the workplace, as well as offering psychosocial services, internship and mentoring opportunities.

### Graduating to new opportunities

This year, 92 small business owners in Cali and Buenaventura completed their training as part of joint work between the Government of Canada, Cuso International and Fundación Carvajal. The courses provided participants with technical and practical skills on how to strengthen their businesses, improve their practices and increase their profits. "Rather than giving us fish, they taught us how to fish," said one participant during the September 2017 graduation ceremony. The program enabled 167 small business owners to increase their profitability margins, allowing them to hire 57 employees with formal contracts. Participants continued to receive technical support from SCOPE volunteers following their training.

"I gained a lot from my training. There is a very high maternal and neo-natal mortality rate in my country, and the training received will help us save lives."

Eucabeth Auma Oyiengo Member of the Tanzanian Midwifery Association

The

## In Africa

## Benin

20 midwifery instructors, supported by 16 Canadian counterparts, updated basic emergency obstetric and newborn care training for in-service midwives.

# Ethiopia

114 community health extension workers were trained to recognize high-risk pregnancy.

# Tanzania

24 instructors received emergency midwifery training and were able to impart that knowledge to 240 midwives.

# DRC

12 midwife trainings were delivered in the Democratic Republic of Congo, reaching 300 midwives.

### Delivering midwifery skills

Every day, approximately 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. The Midwives Save Lives project is working in countries that represent a high burden of maternal mortality. More than 321,000 pregnant women and newborns benefited from our Midwives Save Lives program this year.

When an expectant woman has access to a midwife who is properly trained, supported and valued, many people can benefit. The Midwives Save Lives project delivers basic emergency obstetric and newborn care, and respectful maternity care (RMC) trainings with and for midwives. Basic emergency obstetric and newborn care training reduces maternal and newborn death by strengthening the capacity of midwives to quickly and effectively respond to complications that present during pregnancy or childbirth. RMC training is raising awareness among midwives around women's rights and their role in advancing those rights by providing respectful and dignified care. This change will encourage more women to deliver in a health facility and return for future care.

With our partner, the Canadian Association of Midwives, Midwives Save Lives is helping to create lasting change in Ethiopia, Benin, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Tanzania. In addition to developing and delivering training, our volunteers are working alongside midwives' associations and local non-governmental organizations in each country to share expertise and help partner organizations build their capacity to advocate for midwives. The project delivers community education via community health workers and community leaders using drama, radio and cultural shows. The four-year initiative, which runs until March 2020, is already helping reduce death and illness among women and their newborns. It is also educating communities about their right to high-quality and respectful care.

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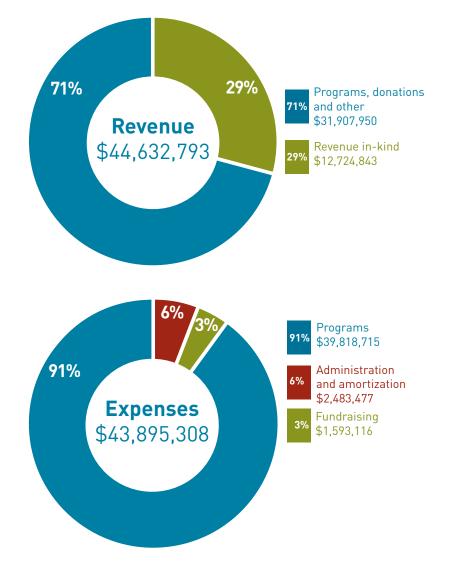


Director **Justin Winchiu** Ottawa, Canada

### **Finances**

hanks to your strong support and generosity, Cuso International's financial position provides us with a secure basis for our work. Through efficient operations and careful use of the life-changing funds we receive, we ensure that the majority of our money is spent on delivering programs and supporting our volunteers and partners and the communities and families they work with. We will continue to use our resources with great discretion. We are proud to abide by Imagine Canada's Ethical Code for fundraising, and pleased that our fundraising investments are consistent with the charitable sector's best practices.

For our complete audited financial statements, please visit: cusointernational.org/accountability



To learn more about what we do at Cuso International and to read stories on the impact we are making around the world, visit **cusointernational.org** 

## Looking Ahead



We look forward to advancing our strategic goals in a world where all people are able to realize their potential, develop their skills and participate fully in society. Visit cusointernational.org to learn more.

### Why I Give

Shirley M. Tilghman believes in international development. The former president of Princeton University (2001–2013) served on the Princeton faculty for 15 years before being named its 19th president. An exceptional teacher, world-renowned scholar and leader in the field of molecular biology, her relationship with Cuso International began in 1968 when she volunteered for a project in Sierra Leone for two years.

"I'm a believer in cause and effect. Giving to an organization that is doing much to improve the human condition makes sense," Dr. Tilghman says of her philanthropy to Cuso International. "I'm proud to support an organization that is making a difference and that I want to ensure keeps on making a difference."

We thank all of our generous donors who make this life-changing work possible.



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