

Skills to Share Futures to Build

Annual Report 2018–2019

Cuso International 2018–2019 Annual Report
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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.

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Canada

We would also like to recognize support from the following institutional donors: the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, European Union and LafargeHolcim.

This report is also available in French and Spanish.
Ce bulletin est également disponible en français.
Este informe también está disponible en español.

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On the cover: *Sabae, 32, is one of numerous women who turn trash into treasure at Chu Chu in Myanmar.*
Photo: Brian Atkinson

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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.

Message from the Chair and CEO

When you work in the international development sector your success can be measured against a multitude of criteria. Articulating our successful outcomes is essential as it keeps us accountable to our funders and the people we work with. But our success also shows in subtler forms. Our partners, staff and volunteers tell us that, in the field or on the ground, a job well done means a beneficiary gains a sense of hope and confidence, or a mother smiles for the first time because her child is safe. The soul of our work lies in these nuanced events. We're proud of every action we undertook this year to advance our vision.

In 2018–2019, Cuso secured funding for six new projects focused on advancing gender equality, empowering women and girls, and improving economic opportunities for youth. We did this in collaboration with private and public funding partners, namely Global Affairs Canada, United Nations agencies, European Union and LafargeHolcim. We led the development of many external policy documents, including Guyana's first gender policy, and contributed to Nigeria's Green Economy Framework. We also developed

more than a dozen knowledge and learning products, including capacity statements, participatory workshops, learning huddles, webinars, training sessions and technical briefs. In keeping with our roots and our strategic goals, Cuso International is committed to being a learning and knowledge sharing organization.

We continue to deliver results from our Innovation Fund projects in Cameroon, the Philippines and Peru. And we expanded the footprint of our education projects for Indigenous youth in Canada's North together with local education councils and communities.

In 2018–2019, Cuso volunteers contributed more technical assistance and support to our beneficiaries, partners and clients than in any previous year. And, we were recognized as a 2019 recipient of the Hire Immigrants Ottawa Employer Excellence award.

The impacts we realized this year are significant, and the Board joins us in thanking our volunteers, alumni, generous 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
Chief Executive Officer



Cuso International around the world

Together with our partners, volunteers and staff, Cuso International is solving problems, implementing solutions and working toward eradicating poverty and inequality—one community at a time. In 2018–2019, our programs touched millions of beneficiaries in 21 countries across four continents.

Guyana

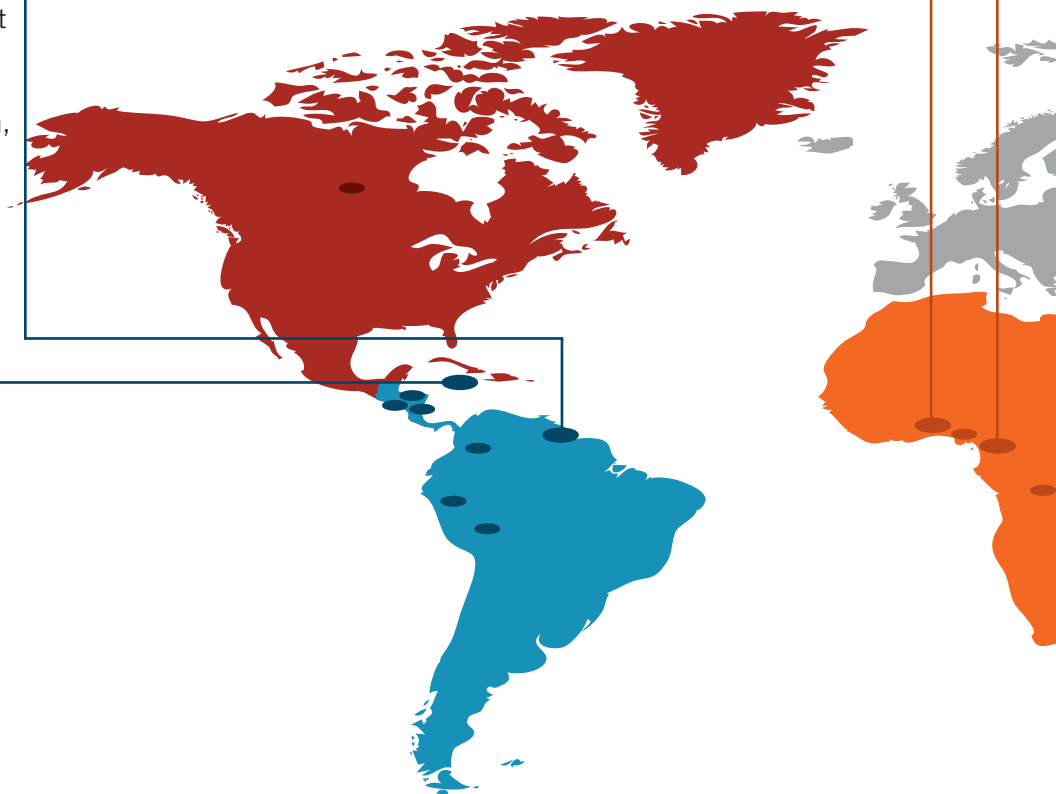
- Trained 500 women from 10 regions on community development and local government leadership.
- Taught women to design, plan, monitor and evaluate community projects from a gender perspective.

Jamaica

Helped Rise Life diversify its funding sources so it can train local people (predominantly vulnerable youth) to manage and reduce waste by making items from upcycled waste material.

Benin

Advanced work on *Women Engaged for Human Dignity* in Northern Benin, which helps 57,000 girls, local leaders and health and education professionals fight female genital mutilation and gender-based violence.



Where we work

Cameroon

Collaborated with Centre pour l'Environnement et Développement and Indigenous Baka youth and women to improve production, conservation and marketing of local honey. Product now sold locally with proceeds supporting Baka people.

Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia

- The SANI (Southern African Nutrition Initiative) project worked with partners to improve women's knowledge about water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Shared knowledge on optimal breastfeeding.
- Worked with communities on dietary diversity.

Myanmar

- Piloted two campaigns:
 - *Say No to Plastic*, which reduces use of plastic in tourist destinations, and
 - *#MyMyanmarDad*, which celebrates fathers and showcases shared household responsibilities in an innovative approach to reducing gender-based violence.

Benin
Bolivia
Cameroon
Canada
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Guyana
Honduras
Jamaica
Laos
Malawi
Mozambique
Myanmar
Nicaragua
Nigeria
Peru
Philippines
Tanzania
Zambia

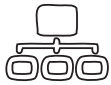


National volunteer at the youth employment center in San Juan de Miraflores, Lima, Peru.

By the numbers



21
countries



182
staff



326
partners



581
e-volunteers



677
volunteers



15,320
donors




\$48,063,729
revenue



4,147,301
beneficiaries



A young Cuso beneficiary in Adama, Ethiopia.

A photograph of four women standing in a field of green plants. The woman on the far right is smiling and holding a bunch of green leafy plants. The woman next to her is also smiling and looking down at something in her hands. The woman in the center is wearing a purple patterned headscarf and a purple patterned top. The woman on the far left is wearing a black top and is smiling. The background is a field of green plants and trees.

“At the workshop on soil fertility management, I experimented with the use of ash from plant residues on crops attacked by pests. The results were immediate. I extended the experiment to other flower beds and this gave the same great results.”

*Pululu Teka
Gardener, Democratic Republic of Congo*

Harnessing the power of volunteerism

Cuso International has completed 80 per cent of its five-year Volunteers for International Cooperation and Empowerment (VOICE) project. Through VOICE, highly skilled volunteers and local partners are working together in 17 countries to promote gender equality, social inclusion and inclusive economic growth—and to improve access to high-quality health services. In 2018–2019, projects ranged from developing a farm-friendly mobile application to supporting research on youth employability.

Farmers' initiative improves yields for local gardeners


In the commune of Kinkolé, La N'Sele, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), outdated market gardening practices were hindering the success of producers. Working closely with

partners, Cuso volunteer Economic Development Advisor Alexis Malu reviewed agricultural practices at four sites, identified problems and found viable solutions. Alexis and his team also trained eight site delegates on how to correct the most pervasive problems, train market gardeners and help gardeners train other members. With Cuso's support, nine new committees—71 per cent led by women—have been set up to sustain the operation. They are forming an agricultural cooperative that will implement marketing strategies, standardize sales and pricing, and improve marketing channels.

“Many farmers are mentoring other market gardeners, helping them improve the quality and yields of their crops,” says Alexis. “We now have strategies to turn their harvests into income-generating opportunities.”

63 market gardeners are benefiting from improved soil fertility, fewer pests and improved product quality.

2 new partnerships have emerged to support the initiative, including Le Cadre permanent de Concertation de la Femme Congolaise (CAFCO).

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a bright blue polo shirt with a circular logo on the left chest that says "KAKAW" and "ASTRANAL". She is smiling and holding a black plastic bag. The background shows a greenhouse structure with green plants.

“Everything I do is for my son. I was working for another employer when I became pregnant and was forced to quit my job. Kakaw hired me because I am a young single mother.”

*Carla Canales
Kakaw employee, Honduras*

Investing in women and girls

Our partners, strategic allies, international volunteers and e-volunteers continue to support campaigns to promote women's rights and the rights of people with disabilities in Honduras, and to increase the capacity of women and feminist organizations to carry out research, statistical analysis, management and communication.

Mainstreaming gender equality and detecting “invisible” violence

Together with Gender Equality Network Canada, and informed by the Feminist International Assistance Policy, Cuso International and Global Affairs Canada organized a forum for women to share their ideas and learn how to exercise their rights in Honduras.

Along with our new partner Instituto Nacional de la Mujer, which implements national law and promotes women's rights, Cuso volunteers Joel Astorga, Gabriella Fiore and Laura Lortie-Maurel launched the web application *violentometrohn.com* on International Women's Day. Under the campaign's tag line *I am a woman and living without violence is my right/Soy mujer y vivir sin violencia es mi derecho*, the virtual tool invites the user to answer anonymous questions that detect “invisible” forms of violence that can occur in couple relationships—such as psychological, patrimonial or sexual violence. It also provides information on the support and complaint mechanisms available to women in Honduras.

2,460 women have used the *violentometro* tool to see if their relationships are violent—and learned about how to address their situation.

Cuso volunteers enabled Centro de Derechos de Mujeres to do more. The centre collects, analyzes and produces information on women's rights in Honduras.



“A lot of climate change initiatives and knowledge exists within these communities. They’re dealing with climate change every single day—they just don’t call it that.”

*Elizabeth Thippawong
Volunteer Project Management Advisor, Laos*

Promoting sustainable opportunities

Managing climate change through a gender lens

In Laos, Cuso International programming to address the challenges brought about by accelerated climate change focuses on the important roles that resilient agriculture and access to forest foods and products play in providing a safety net for local communities. In one project, we applied a gender lens that considered the increased workloads women bear when men leave villages in search of work. A second project advocates for women's empowerment to safeguard forest resources.

Bringing international focus to a grassroots movement

Cuso volunteer Elizabeth Thippawong spoke at the UN Conference of Parties in Katowice, Poland, helping the Gender Development

Association (GDA) bring the plight of Indigenous women in Laos to global attention. In her presentation, Elizabeth recounted how the GDA applied its research to improve the livelihoods of Indigenous women from the Hmong and Khmu ethnic groups. She conveyed a powerful message, explaining how the project is transforming the roles of women leaders so they can protect food sources while maintaining their traditional culture. Elizabeth emphasized that these communities have not only been systematically marginalized in Laos, but also face additional challenges when their rights of access to traditional lands and forests are compromised.

In Elizabeth's own words, "When it comes to climate change, much can be learned at the grassroots level."

4,500 project
beneficiaries were women and
their families.

Elizabeth Thippawong won a UN Gender Just Climate Solutions award with her placement organization for this initiative.



“The other professional health workers treat us with respect and recognize us as experts in the field of obstetrics. Since the Midwives Save Lives training, I am motivated to put into practice what we learned and to save lives.”

Thethe Lukusa

Midwife, Professor and member of the Congolese Society of Midwifery Practice, DRC

Midwives Save Lives

Delivering respectful maternity care

In 2018–2019, the Midwives Save Lives (MSL) project continued to prevent maternal and child deaths by increasing the accessibility and quality of midwifery services. MSL is a collaboration among Cuso International, the Canadian Association of Midwives, and national midwives' associations in Benin, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The program has delivered 262 months of volunteering in the four countries and touched three million lives.

Reducing violence against women

Violence against pregnant women during labour


and delivery is not uncommon in DRC, says midwife Thethe Lukusa, a professor and member of the Congolese Society of Midwifery Practice. “The frequency of violence against pregnant women is worrisome and one of the factors contributing to increased stress.” To combat the issue, MSL uses workshops and other tools to sensitize midwives on the role they can play advancing women’s health rights and combatting mistreatment, clinical neglect, monetary demands and discrimination. Since the program began, more women are reporting better care and satisfaction with the healthcare system. The project is seeing better outcomes overall.

DRC 1,089 community health workers and community leaders trained in birth planning, newborn care and danger signs in pregnancy.

Tanzania 151 community health workers were trained and deployed to raise awareness about health services.

Benin Cuso and partners led MSL-specific training for men and boys in Southern Benin, and sensitized males in Adja-Ouéré Commune about gender issues and harmful traditional practices.

Ethiopia 88 midwifery instructors received competency-based training, and 170 midwives had training in compassionate and respectful care.

A woman with dark skin and braided hair is smiling while cooking in a large, shallow, dark metal pan. She is using two wooden spatulas to stir a thick, yellowish mixture. The pan is placed over a large, open fire burning in a stone or brick structure. Steam is rising from the pan. The background is a lush, green outdoor setting with trees and foliage.

“I gained self-confidence during the training and it pushed me to start the biggest cassava plantation in my community. I will advise women not to be limited by cultural expectations of what a woman can or cannot do.”

*Jacinta Dickson
YouLead participant, Nigeria*

YouLead: Inspiring local solutions

Look around your community, identify a problem and find a money-making business solution. This was the challenge presented to Jacinta Dickson during Cuso International's Youth Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Access and Development (YouLead) program in Cross River State, Nigeria.

YouLead inspired Jacinta—who now runs a cassava-processing facility in her community—to recognize that people were losing valuable time and money by using small pans to process cassava. Her training from YouLead and support


from her family to rent land enabled Jacinta to acquire the money and skills she needed to buy processing equipment and start her own business.

At age 32, Jacinta's women-owned cassava processing facility is growing—a major accomplishment, as most business supply-chain activities in Nigeria such as processing and sales are dominated by men. Jacinta's success is having a ripple effect in her community. She has increased her staff and taken steps to ensure her factory doesn't pollute the environment.

10 communities have been helped through a partnership with HolcimLafarge Nigeria that provides business support in agricultural forestry, ecotourism and aquaculture.

350 YouLead grads (70% women) enrolled in a pilot project to learn the health and nutrition benefits of vitamin A in cassava, and how to scale up production, processing and packaging.

120 school children joined Cuso International and AIDS Healthcare Foundation, AHF Nigeria, Cross River State Government and others to celebrate International Day of the Girl Child.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a bright pink polo shirt, is smiling and looking upwards and to the right. She is standing outdoors in front of a concrete wall covered in graffiti. Above the wall is a bridge with yellow railings. The background is slightly out of focus. A teal-colored text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“Before being hired
by Sodexo, I didn't
know that I was
entitled to a vacation
from work. I was
afraid to ask for
permission to be
away.”

*Gloria Soto
SCOPE participant, Colombia*

SCOPE: Innovative and inclusive

In 2018–2019, Cuso International's Sustainable Colombian Opportunities for Peacebuilding and Employment (SCOPE) project enhanced relationships with public and private sector partners to support the country's most vulnerable populations in eight cities. Despite an unstable social, economic and political environment, SCOPE is increasingly recognized for its capacity to introduce new ideas for promoting inclusive employment in Colombia. In a new initiative for 2020, SCOPE will offer training and employment to Venezuelan migrants and returned Colombians in four cities.

Training for life

Gloria Soto is 24 years old, and during most of her childhood and youth she worked cleaning homes in the town of Berlín, Caldas. During this time, she faced great job insecurity. When Gloria

moved to the city of Medellín, she had difficulty finding employment. "For me it was very difficult to access a good job because I had no work experience in the city, especially related to employment in a company. I did not know anybody who could talk about my past work experience." Gloria joined SCOPE's training and labour engagement program, where she learned about cleaning tasks within a company and skills such as teamwork, discipline, and corporate behaviour. She was recruited by the multinational corporation Sodexo where she has worked as a General Services Assistant for more than a year. Gloria also enrolled in SCOPE's psycho-social program, which supports new employees, so they are better equipped to thrive in the workplace. This year, more than 1,800 people participated in SCOPE's training and labour engagement program.

11,074

Beneficiaries have been reached through SCOPE—66% of them women.

6

Colombian cities have multiple public and private organizations willing to learn about SCOPE's intervention model, which they wish to replicate.

49

companies have been trained through SCOPE's *Ruta Inclusiva* toolkit to create more inclusive work places.



“I have learned how to find a new market and develop my product for that market. I learned how to make a business plan, and the importance of keeping financial records.”

*Zamda Shaaban
Owner of Tausi Coffee, Tanzania*

T-LED builds futures

With a focus on supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises run by women and men, Cuso International's Tanzania Local Enterprise Development (T-LED) project helps entrepreneurs gain the tools, training and expertise they need to succeed and grow. Originally focused on agriculture-based businesses, T-LED is now working with manufacturers in the tailoring and clothing industry, poultry farmers, and those in the processing industry—including coconut and sunflower oil producers.

The project helped Zamda Shaaban learn the skills she needed to ramp up her sales and pocket more hard-earned money. In less than a year, Zamda has increased her coffee production by 200 kilos a day and expanded her sales to seven regions in Tanzania and across the border into Uganda. Her success continues to have positive effects on her employees, their families and communities.

"We have gained a lot of knowledge," Zamda explains. "I advise all young entrepreneurs to join T-LED because they are good, and they make us great."

602 SMEs reached this year by T-LED; all participated in training for business management, marketing, finance, branding and cash flow, and received coaching from mentors.

Cuso co-led the development of the Status of Women Entrepreneurs in Tanzania report, which looks at discrimination and gender-based violence, and how they affect entrepreneurship and women's economic empowerment.



“They just had the drive to succeed in an academic setting. We’re getting students to a place where their hard work is really going to give them the most opportunity.”

*Nathan Burrows
Volunteer classroom facilitator, Canada*

Canadian Program grows

Cuso International's activities working alongside Indigenous partners in 2018–2019 gave our employees and volunteers the chance to develop productive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples—including helping improve education outcomes for Indigenous children and youth in Northern Canada.

We expanded our program in the Beaufort-Delta, Decho, Tlicho, and South Slave regions of the Northwest Territories, adding four schools where our volunteers support Northern Distance Learning academic instruction, as well as extracurricular activities in music, sport and computer science.

In addition to northern programming, we continued to work with our Winnipeg partner Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata to deliver the Truth and

Reconciliation Toolkit. The toolkit methodology helps non-Indigenous organizations apply Indigenous lenses in their work and decolonize their practices. Wally Chartrand, Skhabe-Helper at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata, facilitated a workshop that provided valuable feedback for improving the toolkit.

Making a difference

Volunteer Nathan Burrows spent 10 months living in the small community of Fort McPherson—population 900—and working as an in-class facilitator for high school students taking academic courses at Chief Julius School. In addition to teaching math and music theory, Nathan created a 3D printer course with handouts, tests and lesson plans to be used at schools throughout the Northwest Territories.

23 volunteers contributed 2,453 service days to the program across 12 communities.

A monitoring tool was developed and implemented to help our partner schools collect data.

Partnering for innovation

In 2018–2019, Cuso International developed important new bilateral partnerships and enhanced existing ones to advance our programs.

Nigeria

Supporting young Cameroonian refugees

Developed in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and inspired by Cuso's successful YouLead program, ARISE (Assisting Refugees and host communities to Improve Socio-Economic outcomes) will see 500 Cameroonian youth refugees and community members receive skills training to enhance their livelihoods in six host communities.

Developing youth entrepreneurship

In LafargeHolcim's Youth Entrepreneurship Development program, Cuso is providing management and training services for various agricultural forestry, ecotourism and aquaculture value chains within 10 of LafargeHolcim's host communities.

Peru

Advancing women's rights

Funded through Global Affairs Canada, as part of its commitment to advance gender equality, four leading women's organizations in Peru will partner to strengthen the national feminist, women's and girls' movement. The Women's Voice and Leadership project delivers training to strengthen advocacy and ensure sustainability in 14 regions of Peru.

Honduras

Working with disabled persons, women and Indigenous peoples

In partnership with CBM International and local partner PREPACE, and with financial support from the European Union, this project will enhance inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development for poor and vulnerable communities in 15 Honduran municipalities.

Canada

Cuso e-volunteer program expands

Our innovative e-volunteer program continues to attract hundreds of volunteers from across Canada, who work with partners on every continent where we operate. This year, along with the University of British Columbia, Carleton University (Ottawa) and the University of Ottawa, we welcomed the University of Guelph, University of New Brunswick, University of Toronto Consulting Association, Mount Royal University (Calgary), École de technologie supérieure (Montreal) and Sheridan College (Oakville). Today, we count 169 Canadian post-secondary students among our 581 e-volunteers.

entraide

Responsabilité

emploi

é

Un monde de volontaires

Cuso International is a

Cuso International est un
de développer



Cuso
International



Pour vous
c'est quoi
l'entrepre-
nariat?

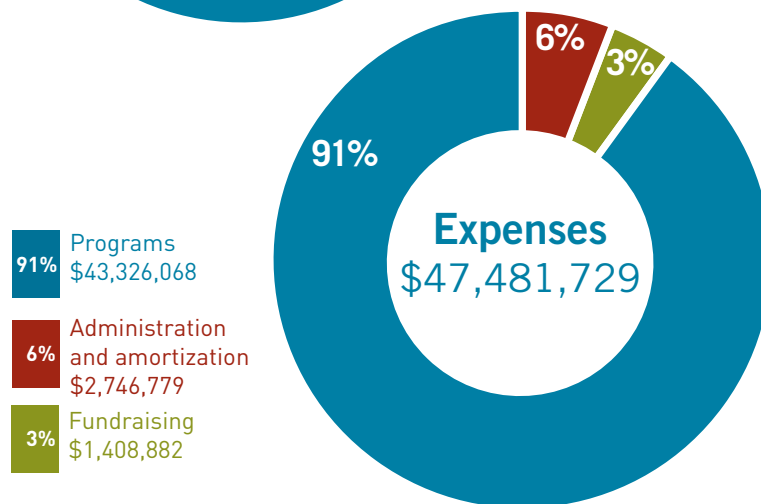
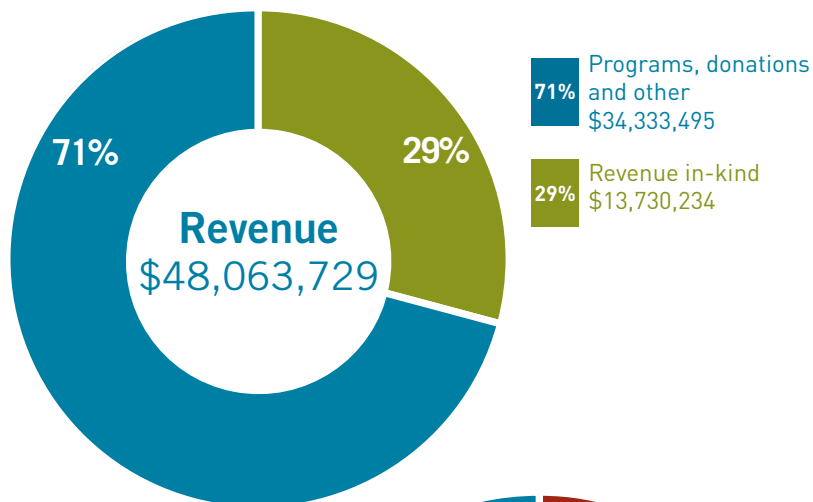
Youth Day in Cameroon.

Finances

Thanks 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



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Ahiya Abdelkadir with her youngest child delivered at the Hamosa Health Centre, Ethiopia.

Power partner: Randstad Canada

We're extremely proud to have maintained a long-standing partnership with Randstad Canada, the leader in the HR services industry. Their vision of the world of work perfectly supports our mission: to help people realize their full potential, develop their skills and participate fully in society. For the past 10 years, Randstad staff from across Canada have made a positive and lasting impact in the countries where we work. Through our partnership, employees can spend up to six months making a difference in the lives of others around the world. They have the opportunity to share their business

development and communications skills in support of our mission.

In 2018, we launched an extended partnership with HEART Trust, Jamaica's leading training and youth employment agency. Two Randstad employees participated, spending a cumulative 1,820 hours working in Jamaica developing recruitment strategies and programs.

As a result of Randstad employee support, these Randstad volunteers were among Cuso's top 2018 fundraisers.

We look forward to growing this partnership and continuing to celebrate our successes together.



Randstad volunteers Katelyn Schoen '18 (left) and Veronica Bloxam '18 (right) on a tour with a HEART Trust colleague at the Port Maria HEART Trust skills training facility.



Why we give

Retired physician Karen Booth and husband Jonathan Huyer, himself a retired engineer, admire people who take their skills overseas. “Hearing about the selfless dedication of Cuso International volunteers is what really inspires us,” says Jonathan. “They commit a great deal of time and effort to specific causes, often in conditions that are quite a bit less comfortable than home. They overcome many challenges to provide education and training. Knowing that our donations support work such as this is incredibly valuable to us.”

“We like to think of your programs as continuing the circle of knowledge—giving back to those who give to us. Canada itself has benefited from many new Canadians who brought their knowledge and skills with them,” says Jonathan. “And, when it comes to our impact, we like the multiplying effects of our donation. Our dollars are matched many times over, allowing our personal gifts to go much further than anything we could do on our own.”

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

Karen Booth and Jonathan Huyer.

