

Cuso International's magazine on global volunteering

CATALYST

FALL 2023

**Creating equal
opportunities
in business**





Photo caption: Program participants Zulma Carolina Galeano Osorio (left) and Albertina Concepción Rodríguez (right), with Cuso International volunteer Christopher Popowycz in Olancho, Honduras. Photo: Quíoney

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Catalyst is published by Cuso International.

Cuso International is an international cooperation and development organization that works to create economic and social opportunities for marginalized groups. Together with our partners, we are focused on efforts to advance gender equality and social inclusion, improve economic resilience, and deliver progress on climate action. We believe that by sharing skills, we can build better futures. Founded in 1961, Cuso International works in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Canada.

Registered charitable numbers:
Canada: 81111 6813 RR0001
United States: EIN 30-0545486



We wish to thank the many volunteers, alumni, partners, and staff who contributed to this edition of Catalyst.

Please send your comments, ideas, and submissions to: editor@cusointernational.org

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Cuso International gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada, through Global Affairs Canada, and its donors and supporters.



Catalyseur est également disponible en français.

Catalyst is also available in French.

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Printed in Canada.

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On the cover: Cuso International program participant in Cameroon.
Photo: Giordanno Brumas



Message from the CEO

In this issue of Catalyst, you will find inspiring stories from Cuso International program participants, volunteers, alumni, and donors that showcase the impact we are having in communities around the world.

You will read about programs in Jamaica and Peru that are helping with food security for farmers and their families; our work in Inuit communities in the Northwest Territories providing hands-on support for students; and about Cameroonian migrants getting the tools they need to grow their businesses and build new lives in Nigeria.

Established as a volunteer-based organization in 1961, Cuso International has a long history of working for global progress. This summer I was saddened to hear of the passing of Keith Spicer, one of our co-founders. His vision and energy continue to inspire us today as we focus on advancing gender equality and social inclusion, improving economic resilience, and delivering progress on climate action.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to learn how this global crisis has impacted some of the most vulnerable in the world. Following the roadmap outlined in our strategic plan launched earlier this year, Cuso International is collaborating with community partners, local governments, and the private sector to improve the economic and social conditions of marginalized groups everywhere we work.

We are grateful for your support, and we hope you'll continue this journey with us as we work to create a more equitable world for all.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. Moyer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Nicholas Moyer
CEO, Cuso International



Above: U-Girls 2 students Sewsan, Sebrina, Mekides, Bethelhem, and Lelise in Ethiopia. Photo courtesy of Cuso International



Above: Gregoria (left), Urban Garden participant, with Doris (middle) and Noemi. Photo: Marlon Flores

Urban agriculture in Peru is creating communities committed to healthy living and a cleaner environment

Looking at bountiful fruit orchards and vegetable gardens in the district of Villa Maria del Triunfo in Lima, Peru, Gregoria remembers when the same area was nothing but a wasteland of garbage and neglect.

Now, this area is generating crops for family cooking, giving women farmers a better chance at a healthy life for them and their children, while boosting the region's environmental health.

Gregoria is part of the Cuso International-supported Mujeres Unidas por la Seguridad Alimentaria y Ambiental (MUSA)/Women United for Food and Environmental Security project that began in March 2022.

Supporting approximately 350 farmers – 40 of which train other farmers – across nine districts within the Lima area,

Cuso International is working with several municipalities and local organizations that are focused on sustainable development and combatting climate change as well as the National Agrarian University La Molina.

Together, a team of specialists that includes Cuso International volunteers, provide valuable training in agriculture, food security, nutrition as well as promoting knowledge exchange among women.

The instruction and training are in-depth, covering important subjects such as irrigation, efficient harvesting and composting, access to local resources such as seeds, and environmentally safe pest control practices.

For farmers like Gregoria, the impact of MUSA is immeasurable.



Above: Gregoria, Urban Garden participant, Peru.
Photo: Marlon Flores

“Now the community around here can breathe clean air,” she says. “We take care of the environment, there is no more garbage and no more flies. And the benefits for the families here is that this improves our quality of life because we are eating organic products.”

Gregoria is also heartened by the fact that the next generation are beginning to get involved and are keen on carrying on the tradition of growing organic foods and supporting a healthy environment.

“We would like our children to be involved here,” says Gregoria. “For each orchard we have reached an agreement with all the farmers — for each orchard there must be three to four young people under 25 years of age. The young people are seeing what we’re doing and they’re looking to what they want to be in the future.”

For Victoria, a farmer in the Villa El Salvador district, the urban garden has created lasting community connections.

“The community garden has created a permanent space for learning and socialization and empowerment of women,” she says. “We learn how to sow and cultivate vegetables, free of chemicals and pesticides. We are very happy and satisfied with what we have achieved together.”

Victoria also uses the knowledge she has gained to support nearby families, helping them grow more robust home gardens in small urban spaces.

And those who do not have gardens, they can even use recyclable containers,” she says. “Above all, families can produce their own vegetables in a healthy way.”

Lola, who is also farming in the Villa El Salvador district, loves seeing lush vegetation where there was once just dirt and pollution.

“The gardens become a green area in the city, and that was lacking in Villa El Salvador,” she says. “Above all, the most important thing, we’re learning to generate our own food.”

She feels empowered by taking part in the garden, knowing she is directly involved in addressing food insecurity, while combatting climate change. “What’s better than being able to create our own gardens and teach the other ladies so that they can also learn to cultivate family agriculture?” she says.

And the project has helped her change her perspective and thinking — she now sees growing potential, no matter how small the area.

“These city gardens, community gardens and home gardens are a way to inspire people to learn that you don’t have to have a large plot of land,” says Lola. “Even with small recycling containers, you can have your garden at home.”

Witnessing the success of the garden, she is now looking toward a brighter future and is committed to seeing this project continue.

“The community itself and the ladies are going to make this project sustainable over time, because we all know how important it is.”

Gregoria shares Lola’s appreciation of the rejuvenated gardens in her district.

“This place is the most beautiful green from May until October,” she says, adding that once the harvesting is complete in the fall, “the land is resting.”

But the work doesn’t stop. Between growing seasons, Gregoria and the other farmers are collaborating to create planting plans, and determine who will manage the different orchards.

Regardless of the season, Gregoria loves the knowledge exchange that takes place among the women farmers, and to neighbouring areas.

“We have really gotten to know people who did not know how to eat healthy and how to balance their food, and that is what has satisfied me the most,” she says.

“I thank Cuso International for this MUSA project. MUSA has taught us to take on the role of promoters of urban agriculture. Every day I learn more, and everything I learn, I share.” ■

Training in Tanzania helps women grow their business



Above: Celina Chibanda, participant of the Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) program, in Tanzania. Photo: Juditha Bernard

When Celina Chibanda founded Mategemeo Vegetables Supplies decades ago, she had no notion it would grow into the booming business it is today.

Celina, 65, first arrived in Iringa Region of Tanzania in 1994 for her husband's work. She sought employment at a local church, where she met a young woman who would sell her tomato sauce to other locals. Curious, Celina asked how she could make her own sauce to sell. The women explained how she had learned to make the sauce through Cuso International partner the Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO).

Eager to learn, Celina started training with SIDO in 1999, where she learned how to process food and started making peanut butter, garlic paste, nutritious flour and peanut oil.

With start-up loans from SIDO in hand, Celina was introduced to the Tanzania Local Enterprise Development (T-LED) project, which helped her formalize and produce certifications for her business.

As business picked up, Celina was able to hire three women for her business.

"Women in Tanzania are not confident and are afraid to work," she said. "They need support."

Celina's business has enabled her to send her four children to school and university. "It changed everything," she said. Through SIDO, Celina was also able to travel to Germany for a month to network and learn from other women about her industry. "We will be exporting new products to Germany."

Celina is convinced that support from SIDO was key to growing so quickly. She has acknowledged the significant role that volunteers play in transforming people's lives. "Volunteers are important to SIDO and to Cuso International," she said. "We are here because of them."

"The volunteers visit me all the time. They check on me and encourage me."

As for the future of her business, Celina is not expecting to retire anytime soon. And she looks forward to her daughter joining her to help. "I enjoy the work. I love it," she said. "When my daughter comes, we will work together and enjoy it together." ■



Supporting education in Canada's Northwest Territories

In Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories, educational challenges are nothing new. Schools in the community often see low attendance rates and a lack of motivation among students.

That is why Cuso International volunteer Parker Willis is helping support students at the community's Deninu School.

"The attendance rate at the school is something that a lot of the classes seem to struggle with. It's very varying week-to-week, even day-to-day," said Parker. "Kids have a good week and then a bad one, the consistency in that aspect is a little challenging."

In recent years, the high school's drop-out rate has been high, and the school struggled with graduating students. But the ball is rolling in the right direction, said Parker. Last year, six students graduated. This year, four students are graduating, one of whom is going to university in the fall.

Seeing this is exciting, said Parker. He hopes to see more students graduate, go to post-secondary school, and continue following their academic dreams.

"Education in today's world can take you to some pretty cool places. It's taken me all the way up here to have this experience," said the Toronto-based volunteer.



Above: A student enjoying the Trades Awareness Program in Fort Smith. Photo courtesy of Parker Willis



Above: A student enjoying the Trades Awareness Program in Fort Smith. Photo courtesy of Parker Willis

“To get these kids excited about education and where it can take them, it’s the name of the game.”

Parker is well-versed in the pursuit of education. He has an undergraduate degree in International Development from York University and a master’s certificate in International Development from Humber College. In the Fall, he will start Counselling Psychology at Yorkville University.

A typical day for Parker starts with two Northern Distance Learning (NDL) students, who stream into a different high school that offers the math course they are taking. Parker teaches and helps gym classes and after lunch is biology with another NDL student. For last period, he helps the Grade 7, 8, and 9 math and science class. After school, there is open gym for the kids and a workout program in the evening.

This opportunity has given Parker the chance to be a helping hand, giving the kids opportunities that they may not have had otherwise.

“There’s so much extracurricular activity that the teachers don’t necessarily have time for because they’re bogged down with marking, meetings, and planning,” said Parker.

“The volunteers they really do play an important role in these schools and providing the kids with opportunities that they deserve.”

The students, and especially the four NDL students he works with, have made a lasting impact on Parker.

“They’re a dream to hang out with. They’re all super bright and committed to their studies. It’s definitely not hard getting out of bed and coming to work everyday,” he said. ■



Above: Cuso International volunteer Parker Willis in Fort Resolution. Photo courtesy of Parker Willis



Above: Vanessa Mbahwei, SKILLS participant, Nigeria. Photo: Cuso International

Cameroonian refugee grows her business with help of SKILLS program

The ongoing conflict in Cameroon has caused thousands of people to flee their homes to neighbouring Nigeria, including 25-year-old Vanessa Mbahwei.

“The crisis is so bad; we were always running for safety. I lost my brother to the crisis. He was shot together with three of his friends on their way to the farm. I do not even know where he was buried,” she says.

Vanessa grew up one of 13 children in a polygamous family in Batibo sub-division, Ashong Village in Southern Cameroon. Her mother has eight children.

“I did not have a very easy childhood,” says Vanessa. “Polygamy is not easy, my mother had to cater to all her children.”

In Cameroon, women traditionally look after the children and family. Many girls, like Vanessa, are forced into early marriage. When Vanessa was 17, she was married off and had to stop attending secondary school.

“I would have preferred to continue school, but I did not have a choice,” she says.

Once in Nigeria, Vanessa was introduced to Cuso International’s SKILLS project, which provides training in business development, entrepreneurship, vocational and technical skills. SKILLS, a partnership between Cuso International and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), has provided support to approximately six thousand refugees and their communities in the past three years.

As a participant in SKILLS, Vanessa was able to gain the training she needed to improve her tailoring and learned how to develop a business plan.

“The experience has been great. The support has helped me start and operate my own business successfully,” says Vanessa. “I have been very fortunate and am now a trainer for the program.”

Vanessa’s goal is to have a larger training centre equipped with all the necessary equipment, such as industrial weaving machines. She wants to give her children educational opportunities she did not have. She also wants to help empower women in Cameroon, putting an end to early marriages.

“I would like the issue of forced marriage to be addressed,” says Vanessa. “Women and girls should be allowed to make the decision of marriage on their own.” ■



Above: Uzon Dorcas, SKILLS participant, Nigeria. Photo: Cuso International



Jamaica: Empowering women with disabilities and improving food security with sustainable farming project

For people living with disabilities, food security, transportation, and day-to-day living can be a challenge. Job placement can also be an issue for people in the special needs community.

Daveisha, 25, wanted to learn farming skills to improve her condition, but diagnosed with an intellectual disability and being HIV positive, she knew the opportunities were limited.

She had a difficult childhood. Her mother was in and out of the hospital with HIV and Daveisha grew up in a group home starting at 3 years old. She said she struggled to see her beauty or love herself.

This changed when she was introduced to Cuso International partner the Abilities Foundation's Women with Disabilities Pathway to Food Security Project. The community-based organization introduces women with disabilities to new skills and opportunities, focusing on sustainment through agriculture.

In the project's second phase, eight women with disabilities received training in sustainable farming. Participants had access to two hydroponic systems gardens, two elevated container gardens, three container gardens, and traditional gardens.

"It changes and impacts the lives of persons with disabilities. It allows us to engage the vulnerable population, provide opportunities for them and to advocate on their behalf," said Susan Hamilton, managing director, Abilities Foundation.

Above: Tianna Crole, Abilities Foundation participant, Jamaica. Photo: Cuso International



Above: Beyonce Buckley and Daveisha Powell, Abilities Foundation participants, Jamaica. Photo: Cuso International



Above: : Tianna Crole, Abilities Foundation participant, Jamaica. Photo: Cuso International

“Most of our beneficiaries would not have hope, alternatives, and opportunities afforded to them. Abilities Foundation bridges the gap for many persons with disabilities to become trained, employable, and independent.”



Above: Tianna Crole, Samantha Gayle, Aliyah Francis and Daveisha Powell, Abilities Foundation participants, Jamaica. Photo: Cuso International

Daveisha said the program gave her knowledge, opportunity, and hope. The positive experience has taught her a lot about farming, both theory and hands-on. Now, Daveisha is teaching other residents how to grow their crops.

“I am more confident in my skills. I always liked farming but didn’t know what to do. Now I know how and what to do. I feel empowered and I am excited about life,” she said.

Daveisha is proud to have successfully finished the program and started her own backyard garden, which she wants to expand into a growing business in the future. She hopes to train and employ more people with disabilities.

She wants to show people that you can achieve anything you put your mind to and to never give up.

“Even when you feel like the situation is going down it is not the end of the road. For persons with disabilities: don’t give up, continue. I feel proud of myself that I can sit and talk to you,” said Daveisha. “I want to encourage others that are going through hard times. I want to let them know they can make it. I want to train more people on how to farm and be independent.”

Lighting the way for women coffee farmers in Honduras



Cuso International volunteer Sharleen Moodie visits a coffee farm in Honduras.
Photo courtesy of Gerry Moodie



Above: Cuso International volunteer Sharleen Moodie in Honduras. Photo courtesy of Gerry Moodie

In Honduras, Betty and Karla Fernandez spend their days working hard to produce high-quality coffee. The sisters are Tolupan, a Honduran Indigenous group living on Honduras's northwest coast. They live in the remote village of Agua Sucia producing catuai and catimor coffee plants.

“We were motivated to work with coffee due to the lack of opportunities,” said Karla, who started from scratch in 2013. “We could also generate income for the family, and employment for other people.”

But one thing makes life difficult for the sisters: they have no access to electricity or running water. Despite this, they work hard to produce some of the best coffee in the region. Their organic product is gaining recognition and has won several awards over the years.

“The Fernandez sisters of Agua Sucia have a hard life. They live without electricity, water, or transportation,” says Gerry Moodie, a volunteer business advisor with Cuso International and the Honduran Coffee Alliance (HCA). “When the sisters go into town, it is a four-hour walk down a mountain.”

The HCA works with small-scale coffee producers and cooperatives to source, market, sell, and export high-quality coffee directly to international buyers. After retiring from their business and marketing jobs, Gerry and his wife, Sharleen, decided to use their extensive background in business and marketing to give back through volunteering.

Gerry and Sharleen met the Fernandez sisters during their 2023 volunteer placement in the Central American country. This is their fifth volunteer placement with Cuso International.



Above: Cuso International volunteers Sharleen and Gerry Moodie in Honduras. Photo courtesy of Gerry Moodie

Gerry explained that the Tolupan village has had difficulties lobbying their local government to bring power and running water to the village.

“We felt that these proud and dignified ladies deserved better, so we put out a call,” Gerry said.

Shortly after inquiring, the couple learned of a program called FOSODE, a Honduran organization that aids in providing electricity to those in need. The couple met with the director, who surveyed the village.

“We learned that FOSODE will cover all material costs to bring power to Agua Sucia,” Gerry said, adding Cuso International will also assist in covering some costs.

In addition to bringing electricity, Gerry and Sharleen hope to help Agua Sucia get better access to water by drilling wells and installing pumps.

Gerry said meeting people like the Fernandez sisters keeps them focused when the task becomes challenging.

“When doing this work, we are always surprised by the parallel projects that we get involved in,” he said. “We would never have thought that we would help bring electricity to the Village of Agua Sucia.” ■



Above: Participants of a program provided by Cuso International volunteers, alongside Cuso International local partner Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille, in Cameroon. Photo: Giordanno Brumas

Creating career opportunities for women in Cameroon

In a remote village in southern Cameroon, most women stay at home to care for their families.

But Thérèse Kaldjob, 21, wanted something different. She yearned for a life beyond domestic work and dreamed of supporting herself and her one-year-old daughter on her own.

Getting there was not easy for Thérèse. She was six years old when she started school. When her father died, she had to drop out of Elementary school and helped her mother take care of her eight siblings. Without a full education, her access to job opportunities was limited.

Thérèse started to create the life she wanted when she enrolled in a health training program through the Centre de Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille in the coastal city of Kribi. Here, young women who haven't finished school are taught vocational skills they can apply right away.

The centre offers classes in fashion design, tailoring, hospitality and hotel management, cooking, and basic healthcare. Provided by Cuso International volunteers, alongside Cuso International local partner Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille, the training gives young women access to job opportunities, higher education, and allows them to start their own businesses.

“This training program gives the girls a chance to learn a trade and to earn money with what they have learned.”

The trainers accommodate the women and their situations. Thérèse brings her daughter to class while she studies basic healthcare.

“Health is important, and I want to help my community,” she said.

Thérèse is already using what she's learned in her community and hopes to open a pharmacy or medical outreach when her studies are complete.



Above: Thérèse Kaldjob, program participant, in Cameroon. Photo: Giordanno Brumas



Above: Participants of a program provided by Cuso International volunteers, alongside Cuso International local partner Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille, in Cameroon. Photo: Giordanno Brumas

“Thanks to my training, I am not only more confident in myself, but also have the recognition from my family. My neighbors call me ‘docta’.”

SPOTLIGHT

#IamCusoInternational



Annie Chantal Djitsa

📍 Cameroon

#IamCusoInternational because I am leading by example and adding my voice and action to a greater cause; the fight against gender inequality. I am helping empower women and girls and promoting female leadership.

After working as an army officer, mainly in strategic communication for 20 years, I took my retirement in 2019 and started volunteering in British Columbia for multiple organizations. It wasn't until 2021 that I started volunteering with Cuso International.

I got involved with Cuso International after reading about different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and decided to apply after reading more about the work they do.



Christi Howes

📍 St. Lucia

#IamCusoInternational because I want to give, share, learn and support the advancement of gender-responsive public policies, programs and services that address equality issues faced by women and girls.

I first learned about Cuso International 15 years ago from my father, who always wanted to volunteer his geological expertise with the organization. When I began working for the BC provincial government in 2012 as a communications and web content writer, I discovered the BC Public Service supports employees to volunteer overseas with Cuso International; it has been a long-term goal

As a volunteer with Cuso International, I helped with their partner Union des Femmes élues Conseilleres Communales (UFeC) in Cameroon. I was a communication specialist with UFeC. My role was to help UFeC reach a greater audience and communicate its mission as well as its accomplishments, help them increase its visibility, and provide them with tailored communication tools. I hope to increase UFeC's visibility and audience, with the goal to bring more financial means to UFeC so they help more women out of poverty, educate more women, and continue to be the strong female leadership incubator they are.

I am most proud of all the hard work I did while working with Cuso International, especially building UFeC's website, which was a tremendous amount of work. As well as all the bonds of friendship I have made with the women I worked with, they are a huge source of inspiration for me since despite facing numerous challenges and obstacles, they still fight daily to push their agenda forward. They work tirelessly and wholeheartedly believe in their cause.

I hope to continue to volunteer with Cuso International and go volunteer in Tanzania next. While continuing to help in ways to give me a greater sense of purpose while allowing me to discover the beauty of Africa.

of mine to participate ever since. Now that life has settled down, I am thrilled to be able to fulfill my desire to contribute my skills internationally in a real and lasting way.

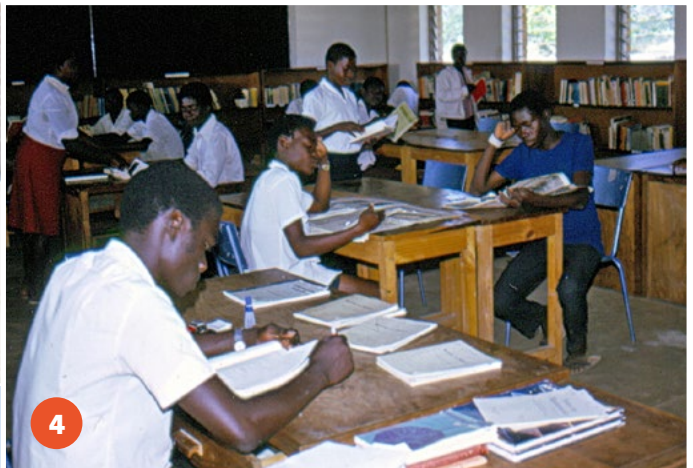
I am looking forward to my upcoming placement, which starts at the end of April in St. Lucia, where I will be working with Cuso International partners to support its BLUEPRINT project; a four-year project funded by Global Affairs Canada that aligns with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and aims to strengthen the capacity of public institutions to address gender equality issues faced by women, girls, and marginalized groups.

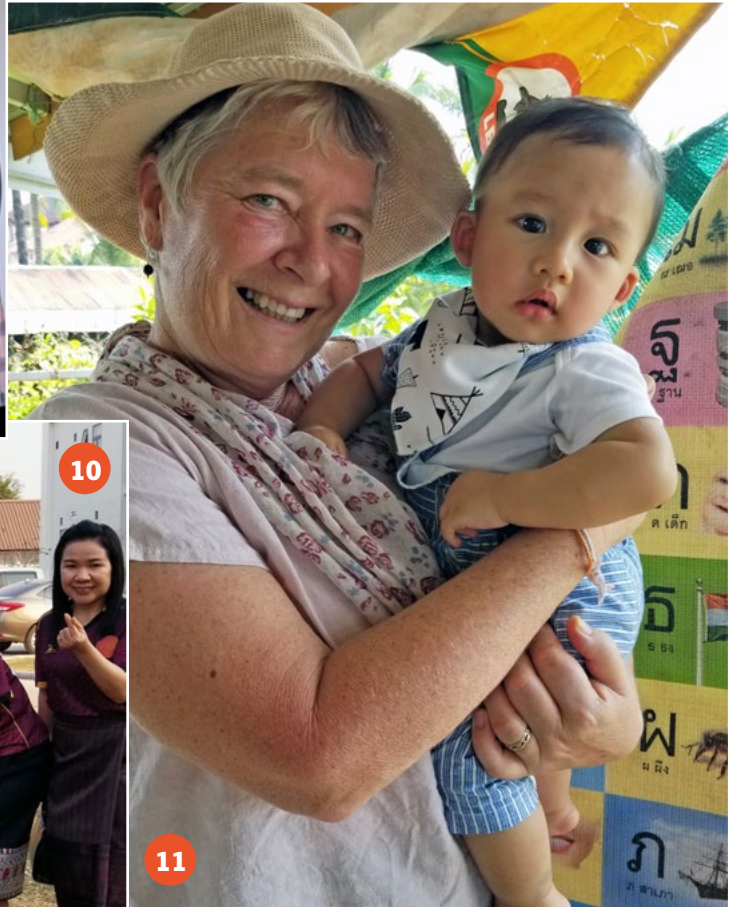
As a volunteer, I will be developing communication campaigns and coordinating community engagement initiatives to empower vulnerable women, girls and civil society groups. My work in St. Lucia will focus on increasing access to gender-responsive programs and services offered by government institutions.

PHOTO CONTEST

Thank you for sharing your experience as a Cuso International volunteer! We received multiple photos for our alumni photo contest and have a mosaic featuring some of the best.

We invite you to continue sharing your photos with us to include in future Catalyst issues. You can do so by emailing alumni@cusointernational.org





- 1. Chikwawa Secondary School teaching staff in Malawi in 1973. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 2. Alan Dill with home room class. Alan started his volunteering journey with Cuso International in Malawi from 1972 to 1974. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 3. Girls in front of hostel in Malawi. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 4. Students in school library in Malawi. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 5. Students lined up for lunch in Malawi. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 6. Students studying by lantern light during evening study period in Malawi. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 7. Chikwawa Market in Malawi. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 8. Alan with fellow teachers at Kapachira Falls, Malawi. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 9. Alan and fellow teachers at his farewell party. **Photo:** Alan Dill
- 10. Philippa Turney with some of her students from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at a bocce ball tournament in Laos. **Photo:** Philippa Turney
- 11. Philippa Turney with the infant son of one of her Laos colleagues at MOFA. **Photo:** Philippa Turney

ALUMNOTES

SHARE + CONNECT



Arthur Shears

📍 Nigeria, 1971-73

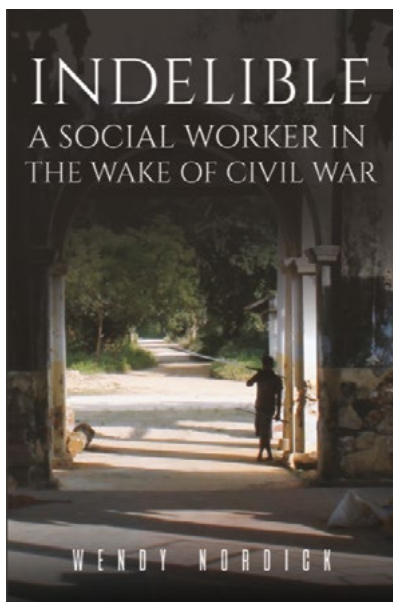
Arthur Shears, a Cuso International volunteer in Nigeria, 1971-73, and Field Staff Officer in Ghana, 1975-77, has written a memoir *Overseas Adventures – From Afghanistan to Zambia and Points In-Between* about his experiences and adventures working abroad in 16 countries from 1971 to 2021. The book is now available on his website (northstarskillsfordevelopment.ca) and Amazon.

Wendy Nordick

📍 Sri Lanka, 2011-13

Cuso International alumni Wendy Nordick has written a memoir, *Indelible: A Social Worker in the Wake of Civil War*.

Driven by a long-standing desire, her education and her faith, mental health



professional Wendy Nordick, and her husband Bill Blair, a retired judge, plunged into a two-year assignment with Cuso International. She believed her 25 years of clinical social work were appropriate credentials to help Sri Lanka, who had the highest rates of suicide in the world. Bill hoped to work for peace and justice. They felt they became laughingstocks when work visa delays left them homeless. Days before leaving, Wendy's father died.

Once in Sri Lanka, she shivered in a rickety beer factory cum hospital where she taught mental health skills. A year later, she was transported into steamy, bombed out Jaffna, the epicenter of a civil war to teach a trauma team who worked with the war affected and tortured during the war. She was humbled by what she did not know and sought help from a previous refugee.



Mary Ndlovu

📍 Zimbabwe, 1992-96

Mary Ndlovu, Cuso International volunteer living in Zimbabwe, continues to support the Edward Ndlovu Memorial Library (which she founded in 1990 in memory of her husband, Edward). Her friends in Canada have started a charity that would support the valuable rural program of the main Edward Ndlovu Memorial Library. Hence the name of the Canadian entity is Edward Ndlovu Community Libraries.

The Edward Ndlovu Community Libraries sees more than 1,000 library visits each month, with permanent book collections in two additional communities in Gwanda town. The library has been able to loan books for health workers and a shelf of books is placed in the Children's ward at the provincial hospital, books have been delivered to 27 rural schools, and they have also provided books to the Gwanda prison for prisoners and prison officers.

ALUMNOTES



Above: Fiona Gomes (left), Tshering Pelzom (middle), and Irish Macolor at the Caribbean Summer Social in Toronto. Photo: Cuso International

Cuso International Caribbean Summer Social

On August 24, Cuso International hosted the 5th annual Summer Social in Toronto, bringing together our alumni community for an evening filled with Caribbean hospitality. Those attending had the opportunity to explore a photo exhibit, indulge in cultural delicacies, and enjoy the beats of vibrant music. Alumni were able to reconnect with old friends and make new ones, all while reminiscing about the cherished moments from volunteer placements.

Shellian Forrester, Program Manager, shared a video greeting from Jamaica, and Tania Shephard, our Head of Programs, Latin America and the Caribbean, shared stories about the incredible impact we've made alongside local governments in

Jamaica, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

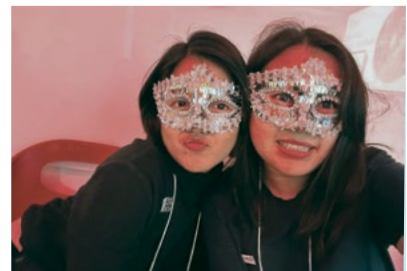
“My CUSO placements helped me to really focus on what’s important in my life: meaningful connections with fellow human beings and global social justice. Being immersed in environments of injustice and away from the many distractions that often took up my entire life when living in the Global North, really made me aware of and able to act on my priorities. I never felt so alive in my life than when on placement; many thanks CUSO and my placement organizations Dispute Resolution Foundation (DRf, Jamaica, 2008-2009) and Support Health for Education and Development (SHED, Nigeria, 2010),” said Cuso International alumni Elizabeth Chen.



Above: (left to right) Tania Shephard, Head of Programs for Latin America and the Caribbean, Keith Anatol, former Cuso International finance director, and Tina Sweeney Sr. Outreach and Partnerships office. Photo: Cuso International



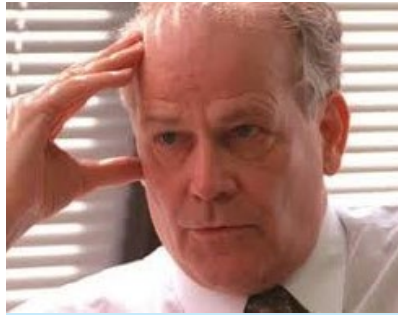
Above: Cuso International alumni Patricia Arges at the Caribbean Summer Social in Toronto. Photo: Cuso International



Above: Irish Macolor (left) and Tshering Pelzom Centennial, International development program graduates, at the Caribbean Summer Social in Toronto. Photo: Cuso International

LIVES LIVED

REMEMBERING OUR VOLUNTEERS



Keith Spicer, Cuso International co-founder

We are saddened to hear of Cuso International co-founder Keith Spicer's passing on August 24 in Ottawa at 89. Mr. Spicer had an illustrious career serving Canada in many roles. We send his family, friends, and former colleagues our sincere condolences. We thank him for his vision and energy.

Keith Spicer, who at the time was a University of Toronto PhD student studying Canada's role in the Colombo Plan (for Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia), led early Cuso International meetings in 1960. Working alongside many toward a common goal, Cuso International was officially established the following year.

Spicer went on to become Canada's first Commissioner of Official Languages and later, editor-in-chief of the Ottawa Citizen. He also served as Chairman of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission. In 2004, he published his memoir *Life Sentences: Memoirs of an Incurable Canadian*.

Today, Cuso International continues to create economic and social opportunities for marginalized groups around the world. Together with our partners, Cuso International is focused on efforts to advance gender equality and social inclusion, improve economic resilience, and deliver progress on climate action.

Founded as a volunteer-based organization, Cuso International continues to value the many contributions of the skilled professionals recruited from Canada and in the countries where our programs are implemented. Over the past 62 years, more than 14,000 individuals have volunteered with Cuso International in more than 100 countries. Their expertise, networks, and knowledge have helped to build better futures for marginalized communities around the world.

Today, as we celebrate Mr. Spicer's legacy, we remain committed to his vision and passionate about the work that lies ahead.

Mary B. Hureau

July 27, 1943 - July 1, 2023

It is with great sadness that the family of Mary Hureau, fondly known as "Mary B.," announce her peaceful passing at the Foothills Medical Centre on July 1, 2023 at the age of 79 years. Mary was born July 27, 1943 in Glace Bay, NS. She will be lovingly remembered by her son, Thomas and close niece, Michele. Mary was predeceased by her husband of 14 years, Thomas Daniel Hureau.

Mary B. lived a full life. She grew up in the Pier, worked in Africa and Barbados for several years as a nurse, as well as actively participating in Cuso International. Upon returning home, she proudly furthered her nursing career in multiple fields including Health & Safety, Palliative Care, and Nursing Instruction at St. FX University. She was well known and well-loved in the Cape Breton nursing community. Mary loved travelling, spending time with her friends and family, throwing parties, and enjoying the little things in life. She had a great sense of humour! We always had so many laughs with her! She could tell us funny stories for days! She was a stylish woman who always looked beautiful wherever she went. Last year she moved with her son to Calgary and spent the year enjoying new places and experiences. She traveled to Costa Rica, a country she always dreamed of going to and truly had the happiest year of her life. She passed peacefully 11 months later with her son by her side.

A pursuit in public health and giving back

When Connie Nunn was in high school, she knew she wanted to help improve people's health around the world. Wanting to pursue a career in public health, Connie went to university for nursing.

She worked with children in Montreal for five years, but in 1980 Connie started her first of many experiences working internationally by volunteering with Cuso International in Sierra Leone.

"There was something intriguing about going somewhere and doing something completely different," she said.

Within a week of her posting, she was joining local nurses to help teach midwives at a local village. This included sharing information and printed booklets that spanned a variety of topics. For example, reasons to refer a pregnant woman to the hospital for delivery, which could include if she has had more than five children, if she has had a cesarean section before, or if she is bleeding.

Along with her fellow volunteers, Connie was helping grow a public health program, discussing topics like vaccinations and rehydration. She knew then that this was what she wanted to be doing.

"You could see that something was happening, that you were doing something," said Connie.

Connie returned to Canada for a few years, but as for many volunteers, the experience abroad changed how she saw the world. It wasn't long before she found herself going back to working internationally, which she continued to do for another 20 years.



All these years later Connie continues to support Cuso International's approach and the work the organization does, including by leaving a gift in her Will.

"The idea of supporting people where they are and working within the situation to develop the solution, whether you're working in agriculture or women's economic development. It's that working in a way that hopes to see things differently in the future," said Connie.

To learn more about how you too can continue to play a vital role in Cuso International's mission by leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Nicole Burgess, Associate Director, Philanthropy and Engagement.

Phone (toll free): 1-888-434-2876 x 205

Email: nicole.burgess@cusointernational.org

You too can take action and leave a legacy for generations to come.



CUSO
International

Below: Cuso International volunteer Ching-Lung Huang (left) and her students. Fort Resolution, Northwest Territories. Photo: Cuso International



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

HONDURAS



Above: Program participants Nazareth Bustillo and Cindy Canales, Honduras. Photo: Scarleth Duron

Right: Cuso International's Colombia team holds a meeting in Cali and highlights companies' commitment to socioeconomic inclusion. Photo: Cuso International



COLUMBIA



TANZANIA

Above: Jesca Benard, participant of Cuso International-supported Kizimba Business Model (KBM), facilitated by the Sokoine University Graduate Entrepreneurs Cooperative (SUGECO) in Tanzania. Photographer: Juditha Bernard

Getting
SOCIAL

#cusointernational

