

Cuso International's magazine on global volunteering

CATALYST

WINTER 2021

CREATING
EQUAL ACCESS
TO EDUCATION



trail BLAZER

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Photo: Volunteer, Genevieve Lapierre (far back) and the women of partner organization Octupan I Condega, Nicaragua



Skills to share.
Futures to build. 🍁

Catalyst is published
by Cuso International.

Cuso International is a Canadian not-for-profit organization focused on ending poverty and inequality. Cuso works with local partners around the world to advance gender equality, women and girls' empowerment and improve economic opportunities for youth. We mobilize skilled volunteers to amplify our impact. Established in 1961, Cuso International is a registered charity in Canada and the United States.

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

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Canada

Catalyseur est également
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Catalyst is also
available in French.

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Contents

- 2 Message from the CEO
- 3 Turning Upcycling into Much More
- 5 Creating Equal Access to Education
- 7 VOICE: Five Years of Impact
- 12 Q+A: Niroja
- 15 Spotlight: #IamCuso
- 16 Helping in the Age of COVID-19
- 21 Building a New Life
- 23 Harvesting Food Security
- 27 Alumnotes
- 30 Lives Lived
- 35 Flashback

On the cover: A young student in Gobe, Ethiopia (Page 5)
Photographer: Brian Atkinson

16



07



23





Above: Madame Bikata (centre) and fellow Buy From Women cooperative participants, Ntue, Cameroon **Photographer:** Brian Atkinson



From the CEO

Cuso may have evolved over the decades, but the spirit that inspired you to volunteer, still burns bright. We see it when you share news, participate in events, and in the donations you send our way.

Our work continues to make a difference, and I'm grateful to so many of you, our alumni donors, who are supporting our efforts. In this issue, we highlight how our Legacy Program is an important way many alum are demonstrating their commitment and pride. You can read about our Legacy Program and how to get involved, on [page 14](#).

In these challenging times, we are doing what we can to stay connected with you, and Cuso's virtual Town Halls are allowing us to do so. Please mark your calendar! On February 25th, we are hosting an exclusive Town Hall for alumni, where our program experts will share updates on our work to support refugees and the migrant crises in Colombia and Nigeria. I hope you will join us. More details and how you can register are found on [page 26](#).

Education opens doors for everyone, but too often in the countries where we work, access to education is not a given for girls, and many are left behind. In our new initiative in Ethiopia, Cuso and its partners are making efforts to ensure girls are included. You can read more about this program on [page 5](#). There are many more stories of impact on these pages, including our efforts to support communities through the pandemic. For even more inspiration please visit our website, which we recently updated and, be sure to click on some of the interactive links in this publication for the videos connected to our stories. Please let us know what you think.

Finally, thank you to the hundreds of you who took the time to participate in our fall 2020 survey. Your feedback is already being put to use. Thanks for staying connected.

Happy reading,

Glenn Mifflin
CEO, Cuso International



Above: Volunteer, Hanna Karin, Dala, Myanmar

Turning Upcycling Into Much More

Photos by Brian Atkinson

Hla Hla Yee lives in the impoverished community of Dala and supports her family by heat fusing and sewing discarded plastic bags into colourful bins, bags, and packs. “It takes me about three hours to make one shopping bag,” she says. “But I like to do it because it helps me make money so my family can eat well.”

Hla Hla Yee, 51 a long-time seamstress, works with the upcycling social enterprise called ChuChu, the Burmese word for “plastic bag”. ChuChu began in 2014 as a three-year funded pilot project, and then successfully carried on as an independent business,

training women and their families on how to transform discarded materials such as plastic bags, umbrellas and bicycle tubes, into earth-friendly purses, belts, bags and many other household goods. The goods are sold at the ChuChu workshop, and in retail shops in Myanmar.

“In the past, our community has not taken responsibility for the garbage all around them,” says Sen Sen, one of the founding members and lead designer at ChuChu. “But since ChuChu started up, people notice it more.” Sen Sen says they have opened the community’s eyes to the potential of creating

“ChuChu is very much about empowering women.”

- Sen Sen

Founding Member and Lead Designer | ChuChu

beautiful objects through upcycling and helped them recognize and take responsibility for the tons of trash dumped in Yangon region every day.

“People have become much better at noticing trash and working to clean it up. But it is more than that,” says SenSen. “ChuChu is very much about empowering women. Women are the leaders, and they run the family groups that make ChuChu products.”

ChuChu producers live in towns and villages near Yangon, and in the northern regions of Chin and Rakhine states. These areas are severely impacted by poverty, conflict, and environmental crisis. Many survive on less than \$4 a day. This situation has worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The income provided to the ChuChu producers supports their families and has a ripple effect throughout entire communities. The Bogelay fishing region is one such area. It is the home of women who supply ChuChu with monsoon messenger bags, made from discarded umbrellas. In 2008, Cyclone Nargis devastated this fishing region, and it still has not recovered. Villagers rely on fishing for their income, but the good season only lasts for about three months. Now, thanks to ChuChu, people are making extra income from collecting and cleaning the umbrella fabric, and from sorting and sewing them into bags. The bags must be delivered to ChuChu, and so along the way, the motorcycle taxi, longboat driver, bus company, and trishaw driver will all be paid too.

ChuChu has also had effects far beyond Myanmar. Cuso volunteer Hanna Karin was a design and marketing advisor for ChuChu from 2018-2020 and has brought ChuChu’s spirit of upcycling back to Canada.



Above: ChuChu trainer, Suan Huai, Dala, Myanmar

“What I learn in the field teaches me things I can bring home to teach people here,” she says. “Being a volunteer for Cuso has opened my eyes to a whole new way of doing business in Canada.”

Cuso maintains a presence in Southeast Asia and is committed to continue its work in the region. As we completed our programs in early 2020, we were in the process of exploring new opportunities when the pandemic hit the region. It has been particularly devastating for the communities where we work, but as our Southeast Asia Representative Tim Cook says, “There is great willingness to continue to collaborate with a longstanding, well known NGO like Cuso.” ■

Creating Equal Access to Education

In Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz region, one of the most impoverished areas of the country, it's tough to be a girl.

Education is not a given for young women in this part of the world. Families often invest the little resources they have in their sons' schooling, while daughters are expected to care for their families and perform household chores like collecting water. They also face harmful traditional practices, like early marriage. Some girls marry as young as 12.

"Girls are often pulled from school to help with cooking, washing and cleaning, or to start their own families," says Wendwossen Kebede, Cuso Country Program Director, Ethiopia. "Girls who live in urban areas have an average education level of Grade 10, but that drops to Grade 8 for girls living in rural communities. Only 27 per cent of students at the post-secondary level are women."

In Ethiopia, Cuso is helping girls chart a different path, by promoting access to higher education. Over the next five years, Cuso, along with the Institute of International Education, and local partners will be working together to provide young girls and women with opportunities to break through these social norms; actively engaging community leaders to change attitudes and promote gender equality. Efforts will be aimed at dismantling existing roadblocks to higher education for women, while supporting their families and communities.



Above: Student in Asosa, Ethiopia. Photographer: Brian Atkinson

47%

of girls who enrol in first grade will be absent from education by fifth grade

75%

of secondary school-age girls do not attend secondary school



Above: High school students in Robe, Ethiopia. **Photographer:** Brian Atkinson

Launched August 2020, Cuso has worked with the Benishangal Gumuz Regional Education Bureau and five secondary schools to kick off activities at the grassroots level. In 2021, the program will provide 400 adolescent girls with academic resources, training and tutorials, and a financial stipend to allow them to focus on schoolwork. Supports are also provided to teachers and schools in providing gender-sensitive learnings.

“Cuso International has a long history of supporting education around the world. This project will enhance academic, social and soft skills for adolescent girls, including those with disabilities, and strengthen the capacity of teachers and education institutions to deliver quality and gender-sensitive education,” says Glenn Mifflin, Cuso International CEO.

Adapting During COVID-19

As with many other parts of the world, more than 42,000 schools were closed in March 2020 to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. In Ethiopia, more than 26 million pre-school, primary and secondary students stayed home, and public schools were used to provide space for quarantined patients. Last fall, the Ministry of Education prepared a plan to reopen schools with measures to provide for school safety and security, covering the portion of the educational programming that was missed during the last academic year, and introducing a shifting school schedule to accommodate small class-room sizes. ■

The project is rooted in three key pillars:



Enhancing girls' social, academic, and “soft” skills to improve outcomes in higher education



Sensitization and community mobilization around girls' education



Creating a supportive school environment where girls' feel safe



Above: Maura Vargas with the first harvest of Aloe Vera – Innovation Project, Lima Peru **Photographer:** Robert Lawlor

VOICE

Five Years of Impact

In 2015, Cuso International had an ambitious goal: lifting millions of people around the world out of poverty.

Volunteers, partners, staff, and donors worked to meet the challenge, creating access to quality health services, developing sustainable economic opportunities, and achieving improved gender equality and social inclusion.

Aligned with the international development priorities of the Government of Canada and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Volunteers for International Cooperation and Empowerment (VOICE) project reached and exceeded all its core objectives. It created scalable, sustainable, and equitable solutions to poverty and inequality in some of the most impoverished regions in the world.

Overall, Cuso touched the lives of close to 3 million people in 17 countries in only five years.



“ We have a valuable partnership with Cuso and their great volunteers who have come and shared their knowledge. They have supported our gender and empowerment journey to recognize the rights that we have as women.”

- Teófila Betancurt C.

Community Leader | Fundación Chiyangua, Guapi, Colombia



[Click to watch video](#)

Advancing gender equality

Fundamental to the VOICE project was the knowledge that equality benefits everyone. Discrimination and marginalization, for any reason, not only impacts individuals, but it also prevents the growth of communities and societies.

Cuso’s work to fight against gender-based violence (GBV) in Nigeria brought together community and government to inform and educate. Elders, police, and young people – among others – not only met to discuss sensitive and difficult issues, related to GBV and teenage pregnancy, but committed to passing the learning on to members of their households and communities.

In Colombia, many have lived with abuse, exploitation, and violence for too long, especially Afro-Colombian, Indigenous and rural women. Local partners and Cuso volunteers collaborated with the community in the town of Guapi to develop a municipal policy on women’s rights. It was approved by the mayor in 2019, and the process is being replicated in other areas of the country with the goal of developing a regional policy.

Increasing access to health care

The need for quality care starts at birth, so under VOICE, work focused on maternal and child health in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Tanzania.

Complications in pregnancy and childbirth represent the leading cause of death for girls aged 15-19 worldwide. Working with governments and communities on education around prenatal care, tracking pregnancies and training midwives, Cuso helped to ensure healthy mothers and healthy babies. The VOICE project’s health programming created access for those in need of services and improved the service delivery itself.

Cuso partnered with the regional health bureau in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of Ethiopia. This partnership provided extensive training to health providers to initiate and expand family planning while improving services, quality and accessibility to reproductive, maternal, newborn child health services. The improved knowledge, skill development and confidence of health workers increased community awareness, access to services and an increased capacity of women to advocate for their own reproductive health and rights.

“ I was excited to have tangible experience to share, and I was motivated by the potential for change in an area where maternal mortality rates are so high. Cuso’s placements are about teaching and aiming for sustainable change. Then, the ripple effect can occur.”

- Jennica Rawstron
Cuso VOICE volunteer midwife | Pawe, Ethiopia



Improving economic opportunities

Overwhelming evidence shows that economic growth is the most powerful instrument for reducing poverty and improving the quality of life in developing countries. But poor and marginalized people, particularly youth and women, are being left behind.

Going into the project, the challenges were clear, but working with employers and entrepreneurs, Cuso increased opportunities. From Latin America and the Caribbean to Africa to Southeast Asia, Cuso helped people build new businesses, find jobs, and generate more income.

In Laos, livestock supports families and communities. Cuso supported a 20-household goat husbandry project in Attapeu, in the southeast of the country. This provided a whole community with sustainable

income and nutrition, even though there was little local access to food markets. Following the birthing season, initial families gave a pair of breeding goats to another 20 families, allowing the project to grow.

Voicing success

Responding to community needs through the VOICE project, local organizations around the world were provided with training, mentoring and resources. Cuso's programs and partners provided tangible and practical solutions for everyone from parents and children to small communities and wider society.

By the end of the project, it was clear that change was sustainable. These organizations could build on the support provided and apply skills and learning to address the challenges in their communities.



“We are lucky this project came to our village. We received the goats, the material for the pen and lessons on raising goats. If we raise the goats well, and continue to breed them, we can sell the extra goats and bring in more income for our family.”

- Phep, Goat Husbandry Project | Laos

Above: Phep Pomeoudom, cooperative farmer in Vientiane, Laos Photographer: Brian Atkinson



Above: Véronique, Songhai farming project, Porto Novo, Benin

VOICE 2015-2020 by the

NUMBERS



2.9 million

WOMEN, MEN and CHILDREN



2,236

E-VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS



1,225

VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS



377

PARTNERS



17

COUNTRIES



5

YEARS

Program areas:

- Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth
- Access to Quality Health Services
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Where we worked:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| • Benin | • El Salvador | • Myanmar |
| • Bolivia | • Ethiopia | • Nicaragua |
| • Cameroon | • Guyana | • Nigeria |
| • Colombia | • Honduras | • Peru |
| • Democratic Republic of the Congo | • Jamaica | • Philippines |
| | • Laos | • Tanzania |

Q+A

NIROJA

Volunteering with Cuso International as part of her postgraduate studies, Niroja was an Education Assistant in Fort Providence, Northwest Territories. Despite her initial feelings of isolation, she grew to fall in love with the community and plans to continue working alongside the youth and leaders.



Above: Niroja, Fort Providence, Northwest Territories

Tell us about Fort Providence.

Fort Providence is without a doubt one of the most beautiful places I've ever been to. Despite temperatures dropping below -40 in the winter, I find there is a warmth amongst the community who have welcomed me with open arms. It lies along the banks of the gorgeous Mackenzie River and it's not unusual to see herds of bison roaming around the town or even grazing on your front lawn. The Dene and Metis population of the community are proud of their culture and are resilient despite the intergenerational trauma in Fort Providence resulting from the establishment of a residential school and fur trading post in the 1860s. Although there are a lot of differences between the North and the South, rest assured that the students in Fort Providence love TikTok, rap music, and anime just as much as students anywhere else today!

What stands out as the most memorable experience from your placement?

I had the opportunity to go out on the land for several days with students and community leaders. Completely removed from the world with no reception or modern technology, we set snares for trapping, did ice-fishing, observed a buffalo hunt and the preparation of the meat, and ultimately expressed gratitude for the land we were on. In this environment, I saw the students excel. They were the leaders and I looked to them for guidance. It was incredible to see their confidence on the land while I certainly struggled! It was a beautiful and humbling experience and I'm grateful that they taught me so much.

What was most challenging about your volunteer experience and how did you overcome it?

Living in Canada's North can be extremely isolating and difficult. The luxuries I had in Toronto like movie theatres, shopping malls, large grocery stores, restaurants, and even Wi-Fi at home are nonexistent in Fort Providence. I'm grateful for the other volunteers who routinely checked in on me and proved to be a strong support network. I also focused all my spare time on strengthening my bonds with the youth in town via volunteering at the youth centre or helping with community events and feasts. They became like my family and I even earned the endearing nickname, "grandma" amongst all the younger kids (which has led to some awkward moments when they're with their families and yell out "grandma!" when they see me around town). This love and sense of community quickly replaced the initial feelings of isolation.

How did your placement impact the students?

My position as an Education Assistant gave me the chance to see the Northern Distance Learning (NDL) program succeed in Fort Providence. The inaugural course was art for high school students. This was the first time these students were offered a high school level art course and it quickly became apparent that there was real talent and interest. I was able to bond with these students in a more intimate classroom setting and encourage their artistic abilities. I saw student's confidence grow as they worked to create beautiful art. We were able to listen to music while they worked on their art and shared stories with each other which helped solidify our bonds. One grade 12 student came to me and shared her desire to apply to art school. I worked with her after school for weeks to help her prepare her art portfolio and go through the complicated and unfamiliar process of university applications. I'm thrilled to say that she was successful in all her applications and she'll be attending Alberta University of the Arts!



Above: Niroja with her students

Why did you choose to volunteer with Cuso International in Canada's North?

I was impressed with Cuso's emphasis on partnership and empowerment with partners taking control of their own development. I appreciated the extensive application and training process and the fact that Cuso didn't just impose a volunteer onto a community, but rather took the time to allow the community-volunteer relationship to develop right from the beginning by providing the community an opportunity to get to know the volunteer before making a decision.

During my post-grad experience, I was able to learn more about the true indigenous historical context in Canada. I didn't want to look at Northern Canada as a place of tragedy. I wanted to learn more about the resistance efforts and resilience of indigenous communities while unlearning any stereotypes or false narratives that I've been taught. I wanted to experience firsthand the rich diverse culture of indigenous communities so that I could bring a powerful counter-narrative back to the South. ■



LEAVE A GIFT TO CUSO IN YOUR WILL.

Let your legacy live on. 

To learn more about how you too can continue to play an integral role in Cuso International's mission by leaving a gift in your Will, please contact Laurie Buske, Director of Resource Development.

Phone (toll free): +1.888.434.2876 x 263 Email: laurie.buske@cusointernational.org

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International

SPOTLIGHT

#IamCuso



MERLE KINDRED

📍 Volunteer | Jamaica and Guyana

#IamCuso because “I help others recognize and live the wisdom of their own societies in the midst of development,” says Merle Kindred, two-time Cuso volunteer, Jamaica 1978-1980, and Guyana 2017-2018.

“I’ve merged Cuso assignments over the span of forty years with other international development work. In many ways, Cuso has

provided wonderful bookends of my forays into other countries.”

“Perhaps my favourite moment was about three months after I returned from my second posting in Guyana. I realized that it was time to write a memoir focusing on my work in Guyana with flashbacks to previous assignments. My goal is to answer the eternal question I hear, “What was it like?”

LOIS BATEMAN

📍 Teacher | Trinidad and Tobago

Lois Bateman volunteered for Cuso in the 1960’s to early 1970’s. She taught General Science, Health Science, Zoology and Biology as a secondary school teacher, in Trinidad and Tobago.

“Many of us were young and idealistic, were recent bachelor’s degree graduates and were assigned as teachers to fill gaps in local school systems. I had recently completed a degree in Biology, and I wanted to make practical use of the degree,” says Lois.

“We were a mix of well qualified local teachers as well as some Canadian and British expats.



It was very much a group effort that encouraged several students to go on to post secondary education, including medical and law school. I discovered how enjoyable it was to be part of an enthusiastic and caring teaching staff. This eventually led me into a career at a small university Campus with an emphasis on teaching.”

Her favourite part of her volunteer placement was the field work she carried out which included half day trips within walking distance of the school as well as longer trips. The most enjoyable was a multi-day trip from Trinidad, including a boat trip to Caroni Bird Sanctuary. None of the students had been off the island before. ■



Helping in the Age of COVID-19

Creativity and collaboration are both themes that reflect Cuso's approach during the COVID-19 crisis, to meet the evolving needs of vulnerable communities around the world.

"COVID-19 has presented challenges of a type and scale we've never before seen," says Glenn Mifflin, CEO of Cuso International. "The creative ways in which Cuso has adapted are vivid examples of how we prioritize our motto of 'people helping people'—wherever and whenever the need arises."

Photo: A mother and children in Lima, Peru with COVID-19 supplies.

Protecting women from violence

in Honduras

Karen Pavón, Cuso's country representative in Honduras, is focusing on a destructive effect of the pandemic that few are talking about: a three-fold increase in violence against women.

The National Institute of Women is promoting a tool that increases women's awareness about the types of relationships they have with their partners. As well the Centre for Women's Rights is supporting female victims of violence by helping them find shelter and providing legal support. For these organizations, Cuso has either been directly involved in programming or supported their capacity to deliver services.

In addition Cuso is supporting women's economic development, working with small businesses in rural tourist areas helping them acquire biosecurity and food kits. The program is also provides key information about how to stay safe during the pandemic. The biosecurity kits contain essential materials including masks, hand sanitizer and thermometers so businesses can receive clients indoors in relative safety. Food kits contain organic seeds and fertilizer, which contribute to food security for poor families in rural areas.

Cuso's Honduras team is preparing to support economic reactivation after the pandemic exploring different opportunities to be part of the solution for vulnerable groups. Cuso recently partnered with [Vos Honduras](#) to develop face masks for "Las Manos Hablan" school for the deaf, the see-through screen allows them to read lips, and has been a tremendous help for this community.



“Cuso and our partners are fighting hard to support our more vulnerable beneficiaries.”

- Karen Pavón, Country Representative | Honduras



[Click here to learn more from Karen](#)



Top: Face masks for the hearing impaired, Honduras

Bottom: COVID-19 biosecurity kits, Honduras

Providing support with emergency funds

in Peru

With more than 800,000 cases of COVID-19 diagnosed, and the entire country under a state of emergency since March 16, Peru has implemented the most stringent COVID-19 lock down measures in the world. This reality has had repercussions for everyone who lives there and has affected Peru's most vulnerable populations.

"Many people were trapped in Lima (Peru's capital city) when the country locked down," says Pilar Garcia, Cuso's country representative for Peru. "They were unable to get back to their home provinces and had to sleep in parks. With no public transportation available, others had to journey hundreds of miles on foot with their children to get home." To make matters more dire, 72 per cent of Peru's economy is considered "informal," which means millions of people have no benefits and no access to income when they cannot work.

Cuso is working through its Women's Voice and Leadership Project in Peru to get funding to some of the people who need it most. The project brings together leading women's rights organizations to strengthen the women's movement nationally and ensure the full exercise of women's rights across the country.

Women's Voice and Leadership has a built-in emergency "fast response" fund that has proved vital during the era of COVID-19. Organizations are using the funding to support beneficiaries such as Rosa, a 53-year-old woman from the

Puno region in the Andes. "With no steady income since the pandemic began, Rosa is one of hundreds of beneficiaries who have received packages of basic items such as food and sanitation supplies," says Pilar.

The funds are also being used to provide psychosocial support for women going through pandemic-related stress, depression and anxiety. Their symptoms stem from multiple stressors, such as fear about the future, the loss of close family members, and gender-based violence, which has increased three-fold around the world since the pandemic began.

Some of Cuso's partners are using funds to invest in personal protective equipment such as face masks. Others are using them to buy uniforms for women who are providing information about the importance of staying home during the pandemic.

"We never imagined these funds would be used for a pandemic," says Pilar. "But it's been very helpful to have this mechanism available to help women and families."

Cuso Town Hall

Learn more about how Cuso is supporting women in Peru through the COVID-19 pandemic.



[Click to watch town hall](#)

Protecting jobs

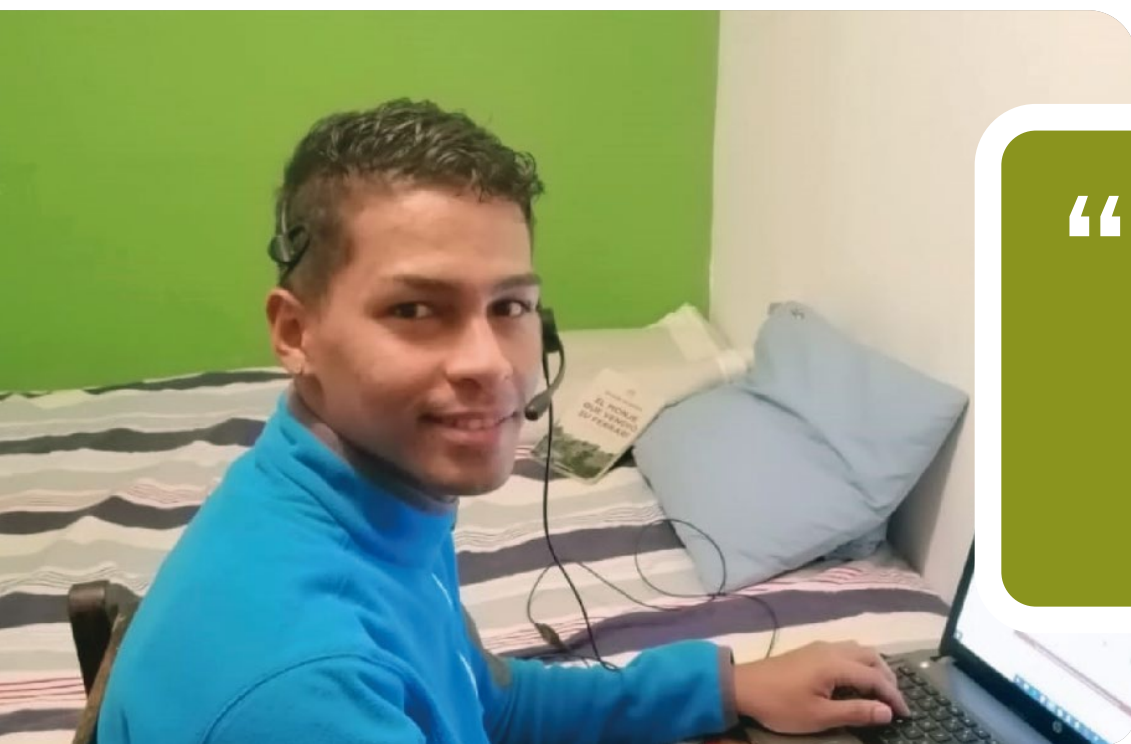
in Colombia

Colombia is a place where Cuso's culture of innovation is protecting partners as well as beneficiaries. The economic and social emergency generated by the pandemic has affected businesses across Colombia, threatening their sustainability and putting people out of work. This issue is most threatening for vulnerable populations such as women, youth and migrants. Losing employment is a devastating setback for these groups.

A COVID-19 contingency plan was developed to support private sector partners so they could continue to honour their labour contracts. The plan includes funding to help cover wages, biosecurity kits to protect workers' health, supports for working from home, and cash transfers for transportation and food. The contingency plan has supported 23 enterprises in four cities, resulting in 90 per cent of workers staying in their existing jobs.

"Without Cuso's support, I would not have been able to keep my job at Almacontact," says Miquel Altamar, a 25-year-old migrant from Venezuela who spent years searching for steady work in Colombia before landing a full-time position in Almacontact's call centre. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Miquel had no choice but to continue working from home. To help him adapt, Cuso rented him a computer and provided him with a secure and permanent internet connection.

Miguel is relieved that he can continue as part of the Almacontact team. "It is a company where people are not classified by their nationality," he says. Almacontact provides Miguel with a good enough living that he can send part of his income to his sister and mother who are unemployed and live in Venezuela.



“Without Cuso's support, I would not have been able to keep my job at Almacontact.”

- Miquel Altamar

Above: Miguel Altamar, Jobs to Build the Future participant working from home.

Spreading health care awareness

in Cameroon

The COVID-19 pandemic is spreading rapidly in remote areas of Cameroon. In response, Cuso has launched a project in the Centre, Littoral, East and South regions of Cameroon to flatten the curve and save lives.

“The response focuses on women who traditionally are less exposed to information and who, because of their mobility outside their households in search of subsistence, are at high risk of contracting the disease,” says Ginette Sindeu, Cuso Program Officer, Cameroon.

Four women’s empowerment centres are directly involved in the project, that includes the production and distribution of hygiene and protection kits to health workers and centres, families and schools. Local women are being hired and trained to manufacture the protection kits.

“Training in the manufacturing of protection kits—masks and soaps—in the women’s centres not only contributes to women’s economic empowerment, but also involves them in the response plan against the disease,” says Ginette.

One door-to-door campaign covered seven localities where community health workers visited more than 800 households to educate people about COVID-19 and how to avoid its spread. The campaign reached 1,770 women and 1,540 men. This work continues for secondary schools and women and family health centres.

Radio campaigns are also helping in the fight against COVID-19. Six community stations in Cameroon, with a combined audience of 200,000,



Top: Radio Awareness Workshop, Cameroon



Bottom: Door-to-door campaign, Cameroon

aired radio spots aimed at topics ranging from stigmatization around COVID-19 to the best ways to manage funerals. The broadcasts were based on a Cuso-led initiative, that trained 122 beneficiaries on the particulars of the disease and how to combat it.

In another campaign, Cuso’s Cameroon country office participated in an awareness initiative on Radio Femmes (Women’s Radio), which reaches 120,000 from its headquarters in Mbal-mayo. The program encouraged people to stay vigilant against COVID-19 and seek health care support if they have been exposed or have symptoms. ■



Above: Ayum, managing her crop - Farmers Field school, Nigeria

Building a new life

Seeking safety, and so much more.

Ayum is a young subsistence farmer who lives off what she can gather. She is among the thousands of Southern Cameroonians who have fled their country since 2017 due to conflict and military force.

Ayum and others like her have sought safety, stability, and a better life in neighboring Nigeria. Although welcoming, the influx of refugees has put pressure on their new communities.

Cuso, with support from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), is delivering entrepreneurial and life skills training to refugees and their new communities in Cross River and Benue states.

Ayum joined 950 refugees and community members to learn more about commercial farming through Cuso's Farmer Field Schools. Using a participatory learning approach, farmers are empowered and actively involved in crop management decision-making, livestock management, and adoption of technology innovation. The schools offer support to marginalized groups, particularly women and youth.

"We believe that once we invest in women, they will be able to not only support their families but their host communities as well," says Jerry Nwigwe, Cuso Team Lead, Nigeria. "Sixty per cent of our primary beneficiaries are women. They account for



Above: Patience Nguma at her farm in Calabar, Nigeria.

the majority of participants who are starting the most successful businesses.”

After seeing the opportunities available and gaining new skills from hands-on training, Ayum plans to become a commercial farmer, managing her own plot of land and selling her excess crops.

“Providing livelihood skills to refugees, gives them momentum and hope to start a new life outside of their countries of origin. With new skills to sustain their lives, they are able to contribute to the economic development of their host community,” says Jerry. “We have seen excellent strides in our program in just one year.”

More than 700 community members and refugees received training, and an additional 200 people gained access to arable land for cultivation of agriculture, livestock, or fisheries.

Due to the early success of the project, the UNHCR extended Cuso’s funding, allowing the project to further expand its reach

to 3,000 beneficiaries in two states across Southeast Nigeria. One of the biggest achievements has been a shift in mindset for participants of the program.

“Despite originally viewing their stay in Nigeria as a temporary transition, Cameroonian refugees are beginning to see it as an opportunity and a home, and they are finding ways they can make a difference themselves,” says Jerry.

Hillary Arong was one of 1,000 people who attended a Cuso led program to identify skills and opportunities to help alleviate unemployment and increase the growth of new businesses. Participants were asked to identify business needs in their communities that were missing and which they could provide. Cuso then provided training to sharpen their skills in their areas of interest.

“The future looked bleak, but today, we have hope,” says Hillary. “Our gratitude goes to Cuso International and the UNHCR for the support.” ■

470

people received life skills training in agriculture, livestock, or fisheries

269

people received entrepreneurship, technical skills, and start-up support training

208

people have access to arable land for cultivation of agriculture, livestock, or fisheries

30

village savings and loans associations created for community-led development

14

Farmer Field schools created to provide hands-on training

Cuso Stories

Learn how Lisangel Barrios Castellanos, a Venezuelan migrant, is finding lasting employment in Colombia.



[Click to read full story](#)



Above: Teresa, co-op member, stands in the shade of her cacao trees.

Harvesting Food Security

The air is thick and humid. The sun is burning down on the small farm where Teresa stands in the shade of her cacao trees. As she reaches out to touch one of the large pods hanging from the branch in front of her, she reflects on everything she's overcome.

Her husband, dying suddenly of a heart attack. Being left alone with four young children, a small farm and little knowledge of the work required.

Weighing her options: sell the land and try to scrape by with almost nothing? Or learn to run a farm?

At the time, she didn't know her choices would change not only her family's future, but the futures of many other women.

Honduras is a country of deep contrasts. Along with tropical rain forests, turquoise waters and white sand beaches, the country is one of widespread poverty and inequality.

“When there’s a need to gather the women together and share new skills, she’s the one I turn to because when she speaks, her community listens.”

- Karen Pavón

Cuso Country Representative | Honduras

Women have few rights and are faced with one of the highest rates of intimate-partner violence in the world. As the second poorest country in Central America, Hondurans experience extremely unequal income distribution and high unemployment rates.

Over half of the country lives on less than two dollars a day; the majority of those are women.

Unwilling to give up the land her husband farmed to provide for their family, Teresa found and joined a local farming co-operative. It was there she received her first seedlings: cacao.

Knowing there was a group of people behind her every step of the way, she began to learn how to manage and run her farm. “After joining the co-op, I felt protected,” says Teresa. “I never had to leave my children to go and beg because I work very hard on the farm.”

Today, Teresa is a successful cacao farmer, as well as a mentor and leader within her co-operative. Through a program developed by Cuso, women farmers are provided with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful.

“Whenever there’s a need to gather the women together and share new skills, she’s the one I turn to because when she speaks, her community listens,” says Karen Pavón, Cuso Country Representative, Honduras. “Teresa is an inspiration to many women who are determined to escape poverty and give their children a brighter future.”



Above: Teresa and fellow co-op members.

When Cuso first partnered with the co-operative, only five per cent of its members were women. Now, more than 30 per cent are women. With food and income security, Teresa and her fellow farmers are important contributors not just to their own families and community, but to the entire country.

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting food security and financial stability. Many female farmers live in one place but farm in another. With restrictions on movement, many can’t leave their homes to tend their farms, let alone access essential goods and services.

While Cuso has adapted to the current environment by providing emergency relief by means of food delivery and the provision of accessible health information, our long-term goal of supporting livelihoods like Teresa’s remains as important as ever. Cuso continues to identify innovative solutions to support the life-changing work of empowering the most marginalized during this critical time. Our ability to quickly modify how we work will ensure that Cuso programming continues to reduce poverty and inequality in the communities where we work. ■



WE HEARD YOU AND WE THANK YOU

Almost 2,000 of you – our loyal alumni, donors and friends – took the time to take a survey. We asked for your thoughts on a variety of topics – why you chose to be a Cuso volunteer, to how you prefer to be communicated with, you responded with candor and conviction.

Your responses will help to shape our way forward. While most of you are very happy with how Cuso communicates with you, we've learned that there are things we can do to keep you better connected with the issues and people that matter to you the most.

Your opinion this year, in the midst of a global pandemic, is critical as we face challenges we've never faced before and serve communities whose circumstances are changing every hour of every day.

Thank you!

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Because Immigration is Not Always a Choice

Join us online for an **exclusive Alumni-only** Town Hall as we delve into Cuso's immigration-related work and hear updates from our program experts in Colombia and Cameroon.

February 25, 2021 | 12-1 P.M. EST

[REGISTER HERE](#)



“ I very much enjoyed the presentation. It was a very effective way of learning about the current state of affairs of Cuso's program in Peru under these very difficult times. Very educational! ”

– Allan Culham, Botswana 1974-1981

Registrant, June 2020 Town Hall, Cuso in Peru: Supporting women through the COVID-19 pandemic

ALUMNOTES

SHARE + CONNECT

Sally Ravindra

📍 India 1961-63

It was fun to see the second year of Cuso gathered with Prime Minister Nehru—presumably from their dress, not long after their arrival in India. Except —Jim Walker, the one volunteer as far as I can determine, who felt it quite appropriate to meet the prime minister in Indian dress—complete with Indian style shoulder bag! Bravo Jim!

I would like to share a story about meeting Jim for the first time, in Angul, Orissa, where I was working for a second year: I was at Baji Raut Chatrabas, a Ghandi ashram and Jim, whom I had never met, unbeknownst to me was working at a satellite school of the Ashram, about 15 or so kilometers away.

One day, not long after my arrival there, the head of the Ashram, a wonderful woman known as Numa, (mother), with long curly black hair which she never tied back, and a rather raucous voice, hollered: “Sally uppa, Jeem bhai is coming, get him a bucket of water quickly for his bath!!!” And there was Jeem bhai, dressed as always in Indian garb, with a friendly grin to my grumpy and slightly resentful greeting!



Sally Goddard *(pictured above)*

📍 Papua New Guinea 1974-76

My husband and I were honoured to receive the Meritorious Service Medal (Civil Division) from Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada. Tim and I met and were married in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Our first daughter was born in Madang. The award recognized our work in establishing and operating the Nichola Goddard Foundation, created after our daughter was killed while serving in Afghanistan with the Canadian Armed Forces (pictured right). A major project of the Foundation was providing solar lighting to



rural health care centres in PNG. I have been able to return to PNG three times to see the impact of this initiative, and our daughter's legacy.

Robert Palmer

📍 Nigeria 1980-81

Listen to your steps | A Kenyan running coach's approach to training young athletes to become champions. Hello everyone! In this ZoneTalk podcast episode, I sat down with Meshack Sang, Kenyan track coach and author, who has competed internationally and has been coaching young

Kenyan athletes in a career spanning 20 years. We discussed the mental game of running and how Meshack inspires coaches and athletes to overcome financial and equipment limitations in order to achieve greatness in their sport. As he says, "Give them a shoe and they'll show you a medal in three or four months. It's that simple for a Kenyan Athlete." And wouldn't we all like to



have that kind of success with ourselves. Please take a moment to check out our web page on Meshack, listen to the podcast or watch the video version of the interview with him. To even greater results, Bob Palmer.

Stan Combs

📍 Vanuatu 1987-89

I am in the final stages of publishing a memoir of my wife's (Holly Morgan) and our two young daughters' (Heather and Laurel) 1987-'89 time as Cuso volunteers in Lakatoro, Malekula Island, Vanuatu.

It covers the subjects of Vanuatu, the realities of international development where the rubber hits the road, and as I put it "Little House on the Prairie meets South Pacific".

Louise Yazdani (nee Gamble)

📍 Ghana 1976

I recently received a copy of Catalyst (Summer 2020) in the mail, and was excited to see a picture from the WARM (West Africa Regional Meeting) at the bottom of page 28: the last person in the second kneeling row with short dark hair and dark glasses (head only showing), was my roommate of the day, Trudy Finlay (married name Paetkau) from BC. We were nurses, running the Binaba Mobile Health Services Child Welfare Clinic in the Tilli area (Upper Region) in those days.

Anne Philpot

📍 Costa Rica 1998

When I started letting old Cuso friends of Raymond Clark's (pictured below) know about his death, a lot of comments, photos and memories came flooding



back. The old Cuso network seems to still be well connected, and so the news spread. I knew fairly quickly that all these stories and photos pouring in needed to be captured and put together. And thus came the book simply titled Raymond.

Some of the stories are Raymond's. I have tried to use everyone's photos and give names and credits when possible. But first and foremost, this is all about Raymond, for his immediate family and his wide Cuso family. Aside from old family photos, stories and memories, information has come from Raymond's own family, Cuso friends, co-workers, trainees and volunteers he met during 20 years with Cuso and his life after Cuso as a facilitator and consultant.

This has been a labour of love. Thank you to the Clark family for allowing me to do this and thank you for sharing Raymond with all his friends at Cuso and around the world. Enjoy! [Read here.](#)

Richard Schwalm

📍 Nigeria 1974-76

I was reminded of my 1970's Cuso experience in Northwest Africa and the people I knew back then, Howie Gardner and Willie Clark. I was hired for a posting located off the main highway in the rain forest at Saint Brendan's Secondary School in Iyamayong, Nigeria. Having obtained my BA from Carleton University, my job was to initiate a five-year French as a Foreign Language (TOFEL) program. With no text books or curriculum, I used my previous knowledge and contacts in Canada to put a program in place. During that time I traveled extensively throughout West Africa.

Editor's Note

Please note that your Summer 2021 issue of *Catalyst* will be published online only. We want to make sure you receive your digital copy. Message us at alumni@cusointernational.org or call 1-888-434-2876 x 295 to update your contact information. ■

ATTENTION ALUMNI

**Are you planning an event? Interested in becoming an Alumni Ambassador for your region?
Just want to connect? Please reach out to Linda Hartwell, Manager, Communications.**

Email: linda.hartwell@cusointernational.org **Phone (toll free):** +1.888.434.2876 x 295

LIVES LIVED

REMEMBERING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Judy Ransom

📍 India 1963-65, Cuba 1972

Judy Ransom, a longtime Cuso donor and one of its first international volunteers, passed away this September, at age 79 after a five-year battle with cancer. She leaves a legacy of adventure, life-long friendships, and a tireless commitment to improving the lives of others.

Judy's passion for international development began when she joined an enthusiastic group of volunteers as part of Cuso's third overseas placement to India in 1963, Cuso's largest placement country in Asia at the time.

Judy spent much of 1963 stationed in a small rural village in southern India. Originally a rural health and community development project, it later grew, thanks in part to Judy's work, into a multi-faceted hub of social services.

Along with the other volunteers, Judy's work had a ripple effect, creating a positive image for Cuso that generated increased public and government support. The following year, she took on the role of coordinator in Delhi, finding placements for incoming Cuso volunteers.

After India, Judy returned to Canada and worked for Cuso in Ottawa where she became the director of Asia programs. But before returning, her sense of adventure called her and she traveled solo in 1965, often hitchhiking, across Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey.

However, her small village remained close to Judy's heart. She returned several times over the years to see how the original project developed and expanded.



It was in India that Judy first met Stephen Woollcombe – a fellow longtime Cuso volunteer who arranged her first posting. The two, as well as Stephen's wife, another Judy (Barber) who also volunteered in India, became lifelong friends.

The three remained in contact throughout Judy's life, often spending New Year's Eve together and reminiscing about their global experiences with Cuso.

"We were all infused with a great spirit of adventure; we were going out and doing something and learning about the rest of the world," said Woollcombe. "It was a tremendous value to us as individuals as well as to Canada and Judy represented that spirit."



“She really was an extraordinary woman. She was a quintessential leader in the service of humanity. Her life was devoted to the service to others.”

— Stephen Woolcombe, Cuso Volunteer

From those discussions, Judy Ransom, Stephen Woolcombe, and others organized a Cuso volunteer reunion, returning to India in 1998. Judy Barber remembers that trip fondly.

“Thirty-five years later, we went back to our postings and she and I traveled together across southern India,” said Judy Barber. “She was so easy to be with, always thinking of me. She really thought of others before herself.”

Judy’s passion for international development was matched by a passion for teaching. She taught English as a Second Language (ESL) to new Canadians at George Brown College. That led to her taking part in another Cuso project in Cuba in the early 1970s, recruiting young ESL teachers for this initiative.

After Cuba, came a CIDA project in Indonesia, a return to Toronto to complete a Master’s Degree in Education and continued ESL teaching at Seneca College. Her Seneca years were twice interrupted by CIDA projects in China.

From her varied Canadian and overseas experiences, Judy had wide circles of friends. She enriched the lives of those she taught, those she worked with and those she supported.

“She was a very loyal person,” said Stephen. “Her friendships were throughout her whole life.”

“You just knew she really liked to be with you. We miss her a lot,” said Judy Barber.



Patricia A. Hurdle *(photo above)*

📍 Colombia 1967-69

With sad hearts we announce that on May 7, 2020, Patricia Anne Hurdle went into the light under her flower moon. She was born February 14, 1946 in Montreal. She died bravely while holding hands with her two sons, Alex (Arianthi) & Sean (Krista) Gallagher. She was a Cuso volunteer from 1967-1969 in Bogota. Sailed from Cartagena to Barcelona in 1969 and in 1973 she became Cuban Country Director for Cuso and married David Gallagher in Havana. Pat played a vital leadership role at Cuso for more than two decades, focused on the Caribbean, where she built strong bonds of solidarity with women's groups and popular forces when independence and liberation movements were emergent. Her work was recognized with a Governor General's Award in 1990.

Robin J. Hill

📍 Vanuatu 2011; Cambodia 2013-14

Robin Hill passed at the age of 80. He was a Cuso alumni that volunteered in Vanuatu and Cambodia. Robin will be missed by his ex-wife Miriam Hill and his children.

Raymond S. Clark

📍 Papua New Guinea 1975-77

Raymond Clark passed suddenly on March 6, 2020 at the age of 72. Raymond was a dedicated teacher, working with Cuso for 1969-1989. He worked as Field Staff and Regional Director in Caribbean, East and West Africa and the South Pacific as well as Cuso Headquarters in Ottawa. He spent time in Toronto working with homeless who suffered from mental illness, and in the early 90s was a consultant with the International Centre for Ocean Development in Halifax, Nova Scotia and was a facilitator with People Development. In 1998 Raymond moved to St. Marys, Ontario to retire, but continued consulting with the United Nations Development Program, carrying out intercultural training.

John F. Kudrenecky

📍 Bolivia 1996-97

John Kudrenecky passed away December 13, 2019. John went to Bolivia with Cuso as a Forestry Engineer and remained in the country after his placement. John will be missed by his wife, two sons and parents.

Leonard H. Parkin *(photo below)*

📍 Zambia 1968-70

Leonard Harold Parkin passed away on July 17, 2020 in St. Albert, Alberta. He is survived by his children, wife Corinne Helliker and her children, friends and loving family worldwide. A scholar, a gentleman, a humanitarian, a master of the dreaded "corrective interview" and the kindest, most level headed, humble, loving and compassionate person. He valued his life; he valued all lives. His understanding of human behaviour was carved by the hand of experience and he used that knowledge to support and guide others; he provided light when others experienced darkness. He is loved, he is missed, we will not forget his life affirming and comforting ways.



Michael McGarry *(photo right)*

📍 Malawi 2001-2002

Mick was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe February 18, 1940 and attended St. George's College from 1949-57. He went on to the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and graduated with a BA History (Hons). He was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship for his fine mind and many well-rounded talents. He read Politics, Philosophy and Economics achieving his MA (Oxon) at St. Peter's College, Oxford University from 1964-66. After volunteering and traveling overseas with his wife for two years he returned to practicing family law in BC. Mick will be remembered and missed by many for his gentlemanly demeanour, his ingenuity, energy and sporting prowess, his generosity, inventiveness and kindness.

Peter F. Harris

📍 Tanzania 1978

Dr. Peter Francis Harris, aged 86, died on June 6, 2018. Left to mourn are his wife and best friend, Joanne (Myrick), his sons and friends. Peter was born and grew up in Mottingham, England, moving to Scotland with his family during the war years. At 14, he went to Mark Cross, a seminary, and completed his B.A. (London). From there he went to Rome and Oxford to complete his doctoral studies. He was awarded his Doctorate in Theology from the Gregorian University in 1962.

**Anthony Shields-Poë**

📍 India 1963-64

It is with great sadness that the family of Anthony Poë, Professor Emeritus (University of Toronto) announces his sudden passing on August 23, 2015. Tony passed in Ottawa of heart failure. He will be remembered as a beloved husband, father, family member, colleague, mentor and friend. Ever the gentleman, Tony will be remembered for his devotion to science and for his quiet charm, kind words and thoughtful manner.

Donald Riva

📍 Kenya 1968-69

Donald Alexander Riva was born on May 31, 1946, and passed peacefully in on October 3, 2015 at the age of 69 following a brief illness. Don grew up in Canmore, Alberta. He followed in his father's footsteps studying mining engineering at the University of Alberta. His early career took him

to Kenya and back to Canmore to work at the same mine where three generations of Rivas had worked before him. It was back in Canmore where he met his sweetheart Merle. His work continued to take him around the world and he made friends everywhere he went. His joyful and sometimes mischievous smile will be missed by the hundreds of friends he made in his all-too-short life.

Christine Morrison

📍 Jamaica 1968-70

Christine died in her own time at Comox, British Columbia. She worked as a professional librarian at University of Victoria, and in Jamaica with Cuso. Later she trained in San Francisco as a psychotherapist (Drama Therapist) and had a private practice in Salmon Arm and Vernon, British Columbia. In her later years, she took the name Dandelion, worked with Animal Protection of New Mexico and lived in the City

in the Sun of Columbus, New Mexico, for several seasons. She was a fervent activist in Animal Protection, women's issues and environmental issues. She enjoyed many friends through the Unitarian Fellowship in Comox, and sends her love, gratitude and blessings to all.

Nancy T. Robinson (née Lash)

📍 Ghana 1967-69

Nancy Tanis Robinson (née Lash) passed peacefully on Friday, September 13, 2019 at the age of 75. Dear wife of Ian Robinson. Beloved mother of Tanis (Jonathon Feasby), Seanna (Dan Michaluk) and Airlie (Kevin McCann). Loving grandmother to Mack and Calvin Feasby, Hugo and Penny Robinson, and West and Nora Mae McCann. Sister of Timothy Lash and the late Marietta (aka Mouse) Lash; aunt of Zeb Reid (Becky). Lover of all things Muskoka. Touched the lives of so many with her charisma, warmth, generosity, fun and ability to light up the room.

Madeleine Auger

📍 Peru 1963-65

Madeleine Auger passed away on June 26, 2018 at the age of 88. She was the daughter of the late Dominique Auger and the late Eugénie Lamoureux. She is survived by her sisters Paulette (the late Hector Poirier), Marguerite and Rachel (Yvon Chalifoux), as well as her nephews, nieces and friends.

Wayne F. Westfall

📍 Jamaica 1984

Wayne, surrounded by his extended family of friends, died peacefully and filled with love and gratitude, at home. Wayne was born in Sarnia, August 15, 1948 and grew up in Point Edward, Ontario. He graduated from the University of Western Ontario with an honours degree in chemistry and from the University of Toronto with a Masters degree in Social Work. He was an adventurer and travelled the world, spending two years in Sierra Leone where he taught as a Cuso volunteer.

Ronald Dokis

📍 Bolivia 1997-98

Ron (Ronald Dokis) passed away on Thursday, March 26, 2020. Cherished father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Ron enjoyed hunting, fishing, travelling and spending time at his cottage at the West Arm and his home in Puerto Plata. He will be missed by family and friends.

Marshall Gregory

📍 Sierra Leone 1972-74

John Marshall Gregory of Edmonton, passed away Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at the age of 68. Marshall will be missed by his wife, Lillian, of 43 years; his two sons, his granddaughter and his brother.



Janette Mary Gibson (photo above)

📍 Tanzania 1977-78

On November 11, 2020, Jan Gibson passed at St. John's Hospice, Vancouver. She is survived by her husband Ronald, children Glyn (Lacey), Jamie (Leila) and Matthew (Emma) and grandchild Kian.

Born September 17, 1946, Jan grew up in the town of Putaruru in the pastoral Waikato region of New Zealand.

In 1972, she met her husband Ron. They were married in 1974 in Saskatoon. They enjoyed three years in Île-à-la-Crosse, a remote village in northern Saskatchewan and then working with Cuso in Tanzania for two years where Jan assessed projects of benefit to women.

In 2010, Jan was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. When her time drew short, she was surrounded by her loving family and warmed by the wishes and prayers of those whose lives she had brightened. ■



FLASHBACK

Who do you recognize? Help us dust off this memory by sharing your stories or identifying those in the photo. Please email us at editor@cusointernational.org. Submissions will be shared via the next edition of *Catalyst*.

Did you recognize anyone in this photo?

We asked our readers to send in their best guesses. Here's part of what we received.

“ I was so surprised to see the photo of our Cuso group as the Flashback! This is the 1962-63 India group. We arrived in New Delhi, late summer 1962 and during our orientation met with Nehru, centre front. We remain a close “Tribe” as we gathered last year for a “Love In” for Tom Schatzky who passed away shortly after. We also miss Jean Ferguson, Sue Van Iterson, Dave Ingram, and Reggie Modlich who had passed away earlier.”

- Catherine Brackley | India 1962-63.



Back row left to right: John Wood, Irene Berry, Jim Walker, Jean Ferguson (in the shadow), Marilyn Cook (Dougherty), Bill Van Iterson, Phil Helwig (Nehru), Tom Schatzky, Dave Ingram, Catherine Thompson (Brackley), Nancy Hogarth (Christie), Ken Cude. **Front kneeling:** Reggie Modlich, Susan Hamilton (Van Iterson), Joy Woolfrey, Karem Hall (Wright).



life CHANGER



Peter Phillip, Vanuatu 1983-1985

Raised on a mixed cattle and grain farm in BC, Peter Philip always planned to carry on the family business. However, in 1983, at a crossroad in his life, wondering where he wanted to be and what he wanted to do, he found himself in Vanuatu, South Pacific, volunteering with Cuso International as Assistant Manager on a cattle station. Now, 37 years later, Peter runs the family farm and continues to support Cuso's mission.

"The community work still has to go on and the focus on women and gender equality is a good thing." As an alumnus and donor, Peter's volunteer experience had a profound affect on him, and he sees the benefits of his continued support. "I got far more out of it than I ever contributed to the country, but I like to think that I did make a bit of a difference. I loved it. I loved the people."

To learn more about how you too can continue to play an integral role in Cuso International's mission, please contact Laurie Buske, Director of Resource Development.

Phone (toll free): +1.888.434.2876 x 263 Email: laurie.buske@cusointernational.org

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