

ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016

CUSC
International

Cuso International would like to recognize our patron, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada.

The governor general plays a key role in promoting national identity by supporting and promoting Canadian values, diversity, inclusion, culture and heritage. As such, the governor general is patron of many community, charitable, military and cultural associations, as well as public service organizations, lending them vital support and recognition for their outstanding contributions to society.

Photo credit: Sgt Ronald Duchesne, Rideau Hall © OSGG, 2015.



Volunteers

220



E-Volunteers

243

Top to bottom: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nicaragua, Myanmar

Cover: Justine Mbene is the Secretary of the Cassava Production Plant Management Committee in Akom II, Cameroon



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Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

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

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE



Beneficiaries
185,066



Partners
212



Countries
20

In January, I had the privilege of joining Indigenous leaders, including elders and youth, in Winnipeg to discuss Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report and how Cuso International can best contribute to meaningful reconciliation. It was at once inspiring and challenging—we're on a path to acknowledging past harms but these past harms have had profound effects on generations. I'm pleased we have launched efforts to engage with partners here in Canada to explore the role we can play; guidance from these leaders will inform our decisions. We are focusing on how the UN Sustainable Development Goals can help give definition to our work and set new standards for Canada. Efforts are underway in British Columbia where our first volunteer worked with Reconciliation Canada. These were highlights for me this past year. Cuso International is also engaged in reconciliation in other parts of the world.

We have strengthened Cuso International this year to ensure that we are equipped to succeed in our mission in a rapidly changing world and a complex funding environment. Effective controls are in place, along with a clear and fiscally prudent path forward so we can invest in the organization for innovation and expansion. Thank you to staff, our CEO and the Board of Directors, who have been steadfast in guiding this work. I also want to thank our supporters, partners, volunteers and those who continue to place their trust in Cuso International so it can continue to have lasting impact in the world. It's been an eventful year.

Sincerely,



Hon. Lloyd Axworthy
Board Chair

This past year I had the opportunity to gain deeper insight into our programs and our volunteers. I saw first hand how Cuso International creates lasting impact. The dedication of our partners to those they serve, the skills of our volunteers, and our committed and hard-working staff and Board of Directors are all key to our success. I met many of our alumni and donors who shared with me why they choose to support us and I thank them for their trust. It has been a wonderful year, with much to celebrate. The UN Sustainable Development Goals have given us increased momentum in establishing new partnerships here in Canada that will enable us to participate actively in reconciliation. We launched two new international programs: SCOPE in Colombia is supporting peacebuilding; the Tanzanian Local Enterprise Development program (T-LED) is improving prospects for small and medium enterprises. We are building on experience gained over fifty-five years and collaborating across sectors to address complex issues. Cuso International has been taking our collective learning and applying it to Canada's recent International Assistance Review—our decades of experience give us a breadth of knowledge that we hope will help guide this country's leadership on the global stage for years to come. It is a privilege to lead this incredibly important Canadian institution and support partners around the world as they achieve their goals.



Thank you for your support,

Evelyne Guindon
Chief Executive Officer

COMMUNITY

Communities thrive when citizens are safe and included. In our work, we have seen that discriminatory attitudes, beliefs and behaviours reinforce and perpetuate inequality; they can also undermine inclusive development efforts.

We work in many countries where people are excluded due to traits such as gender, ethnicity, and mental or physical ability. For vulnerable people, this exclusion creates substantial barriers to accessing help and benefiting from development activities.

The most vulnerable people are those with multiple attributes that attract discrimination. For example, a disabled woman from an ethnic minority group will face more barriers than a woman from the majority population.

At Cuso International, we have developed a variety of initiatives to break down barriers so vulnerable individuals and groups can participate in their communities.

Fundamental to our efforts are our community volunteers. As carefully recruited experts, our volunteers engage with local partners to develop programming in areas such as gender equality, access to justice, accountability and transparency, citizen participation and good governance. Volunteers like Noelia Ruiz contribute their time, knowledge and skills to support communities in Central America, the Andean region, the Caribbean, Africa and Southeast Asia.

In October 2015, Noelia traveled to Myanmar to work as a Gender Consultant with Education Initiatives (EI), a local not-for-profit organization that promotes democracy and builds leadership capacity in women.

During her six-month placement, Noelia developed and evaluated training curricula for women in politics. In November, Noelia witnessed the impact of EI's work when a

record number of women were elected to the Myanmar Parliament. Seats held by women soared from 4% to 13%.

"We're giving them the confidence to speak up, be more confident and assertive," says Noelia. "We want the women to be role models for other women, so they can prepare for the next election."

In our Gender Equality and Social Inclusion work, we consider the individual needs of our partners and beneficiaries. In Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, we direct efforts on policy measures that reduce inequality and exclusion. In addition, in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, we focus on initiatives to encourage change in attitude and behaviour.

We are further expanding our reach in the Community focus area. We have added a research agenda to generate evidence-based programming and share our learning with others working in this area around the world.

Through the efforts of committed volunteers like Noelia, Cuso International works with local partners to support healthy, productive inclusive communities...from the grass-roots up.





Noelia and colleagues



Cuso International partners in Myanmar



Partners
36



Volunteers
20



E-Volunteers
31



Partners
20



Volunteers
31



E-Volunteers
40

HEALTH

Pelida Shinga lives in Kalenga, in rural Tanzania. When the mother of three became pregnant, she was not able to access the recommended four antenatal visits until late in her pregnancy. When she finally had an ultrasound, Pelida learned she was carrying twins. When she went into labour, Pelida was advised to travel 20 kilometres to the Maweni Referral hospital in Kigoma because of potential complications. Her three older children stayed home with family.

Pelida delivered a beautiful baby girl, who she named Kulwa. But Kulwa's twin did not survive the birth. Pelida returned home with her new daughter, only to have to return again when Kulwa spiked a fever and developed a skin condition. **Sixty kilometres of travel alone back and forth with a newborn to get specialized care.**

The tragedy of Pelida's story is compounded by the fact that tens of thousands of women and children across Africa suffer the consequences of inadequate or inaccessible health care that fails to protect them and their families from preventable and treatable causes.

Cuso International wants to make health services more accessible closer to home so women, children and families can get the care they want and need, when they need it.

Through our Volunteers for International Cooperation and Empowerment (VOICE) program, we are delivering women's and children's health programs, including reproductive health in Tanzania, Ethiopia, the Democratic

Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria as well as mental health programs in Benin.

Our skilled volunteers are working with local health partners, such as hospitals, training colleges and community organizations, to strengthen health systems through capacity assessment, skills transfer and two-way exchange of knowledge, experience and information. We support local partners in providing evidence-based health information so individuals can make informed health decisions for themselves and their families. Our work helps communities increase engagement with local health systems to better respond to local needs.

We work closely with local partners to design programs that address each country's specific context, priorities and opportunities. For example, in Pelida's Tanzania, we worked with the Kigoma regional hospital to introduce the use of low-cost health technologies, such as the Newborn Triage Checklist and portable ultrasound devices that require little maintenance and can be operated by non-technical health care workers where power is scarce. Through these—and other interventions—we will reach 16,900 women and children over the life of the project, as well as 230 health workers in Tanzania alone.

When women and children are healthy, their communities benefit. A healthy mother bears a healthy child. A working woman contributes to the economy and earns money to provide health care and education for her family. An adolescent with access to family planning services stays in school, delays marriage and earns a higher income. These social and economic benefits all start with timely access to quality health care.



Ethiopia training

LIVELIHOOD

Colombia's Fruandes is a Fairtrade and organic certified company that dehydrates organically grown fruit—mango, dragon fruit, golden berries, pineapple and baby bananas—to produce healthy, sweet-tasting snacks.

Short for Frutos de los Andes (Fruit of the Andes), Fruandes was launched in 2002, after coffee prices plummeted on the global market. Since its humble beginnings in a cramped, rented space in a low-income area of capital city Bogotá, improving the lives of Colombians living in poverty has been the driving force behind Fruandes. Six single-parent women from Altos de Cazucá, a suburb of Bogotá where more than 20,000 displaced Colombians live in very difficult conditions, were the first to come on board as employees.

Cuso International's partnership with Fruandes is focused on supporting the company's sustainable expansion and its relocation to Ibagué, a city strategically located in the middle of the country, to address the growing demand for its dehydrated fruit products. Over the past year, corporate, international and e-volunteers have supported Fruandes by conducting market studies, improving financial and accounting tools and practices, and empowering farmers and employees through leadership and gender equality training.

The company now works with 120 small-scale farmers in six of Colombia's regions, where the rich soil, tropical climate and high altitudes of the Andes guarantee optimal conditions for growing fruit trees. Orders are placed by Fruandes up to a year in advance, providing stability for the farmers, who are paid the best possible price for their fruit. At the production facility the large majority of employees are women—up to 45 during peak fruit-processing periods. Like Bernarda

Herrera, these women skillfully and lovingly hand-pick, wash, peel, cut and dehydrate the fruit, which is then packaged and exported to several countries, including Canada.

"I have never really had a stable job before; I was a housewife my entire life," says Bernarda, who earns a fair wage working with Fruandes and is provided with healthcare and education for her children. "Now I can help my family economically. It makes me feel better, more fulfilled."

We are also partnering with Sistema B Colombia, an organization that certifies businesses like Fruandes as "B Corps". These are for-profit companies that offer innovative solutions to social and environmental challenges—B Corps' business model and decision-making rely on four fundamental areas: governance, workers, community and environment. "Fruandes' commitment to fair trade, environmentally-friendly business practices and its inclusion of vulnerable women make it a company that's good for the world, not just one of the world's good companies," says Laura Vélez, Executive Director of Sistema B Colombia.





Mango cultivation
in Nicaragua



Fruandes, Colombia



Partners
53



Volunteers
123



E-Volunteers
133

CANADA

To ensure that Indigenous peoples are defining and leading reconciliation in Canada, Cuso International volunteers are strengthening the capacity of Indigenous communities to address the root causes of poverty. Retired entrepreneur Alastair Henry was the first Cuso International volunteer to be placed in Canada with partner Reconciliation Canada to support economic reconciliation. Alastair, and many volunteers to come, will support healing and reconciliation and build meaningful partnerships that will create positive change here in Canada and beyond.



NICARAGUA

We are working with rural women producers in Nicaragua, one of Latin America's poorest countries. With the support of our local partners and volunteers, women—many of who have fled abuse—are gaining valuable financial and business skills, self-confidence and are embarking on a safe path to self-sufficiency. Training in rights and organizational capacity has helped budding female beekeepers move beyond selling their honey in local communities to branching out into farmers' markets and natural food stores. Sweet!



GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

COLOMBIA

Launched in February 2016 the SCOPE: Building Futures Through Employment project aims to help Colombians living in poverty—especially youth, women and victims of internal conflict—find meaningful and sustainable employment. Together with the Government of Canada and a robust team of local partners, we are providing market-relevant technical and soft skills training, internships and mentorship opportunities to 4,000 participants in eight cities. Psychosocial support is also being made available to those coping with the legacy of living in conflict-affected areas.



NIGERIA

Victor Uzodife had dreams of owning a flourishing poultry farm, however lack of finance and skill put his ambitions on hold. Fortune smiled on the aspiring entrepreneur in 2015, when he heard about our YouLead project. He participated in a two-week entrepreneurship development training course. Since then he has successfully raised and sold his first flock of 250 birds and is currently raising a second flock of 350 birds.

YouLead, now in its second of five years, is providing essential entrepreneurial training and support to young women and men between the ages of 18 and 35 in Cross River State.



TANZANIA

Wpengo and her family own a burgeoning farm but they need advice on how to market their products and attract investment. Wpengo is one of the thousands of small and medium enterprises that will be supported through the Tanzanian Local Enterprise Development

(T-LED) project. With support from Global Affairs Canada, volunteers will provide market-driven business development services and help Wpengo and other business owners access growth markets.



PHILIPPINES

One of our newest country programs was launched this year in collaboration with Gawad Kalinga (GK), a Philippines-based movement that aims to end poverty for 5 million families by restoring the dignity of the poor. Through

placements at the innovative GK Enchanted Farm, an incubator for social entrepreneurs, and at the GK Development Foundation, volunteers are able to support sustainable initiatives across the value chain. Diaspora partner GK Canada is involved in supporting these initiatives by mobilizing their network for volunteer recruitment, public engagement and fundraising efforts in Canada.



OUR DONORS OUR HEROES



THANK YOU to each and every one of the individuals, foundations, organisations, corporations and the Government of Canada who stood beside each of our volunteers in 2015. We are proud to work towards the eradication of poverty on your behalf.

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 Stefania Zakala



“...increased income for farmers in Laos so they could send their children to school.”

– Sharleen Moodie, Cuso International volunteer

“...strengthened health-care in Ethiopia and saved the lives of mothers and their babies.”

– Rebecca Davidson, Cuso International Global Lead for Health



“...gave me a voice. Now I dream about a future where all women in Nicaragua know their rights.”

– Rosibel, President, Las Diosas (cooperative of female farmers)

A HERO'S LEGACY

Beatrice Mae Millar lived a beautiful life. When she passed, surrounded by loved ones, Bea ensured her ability to spread joy didn't end. She chose to leave a gift in her will to Cuso International. Now, women around the world are, just like Bea, blazing new trails in their own communities. Thank you Bea, and each compassionate individual listed here, for the joy and hope you continue to bring to so many.



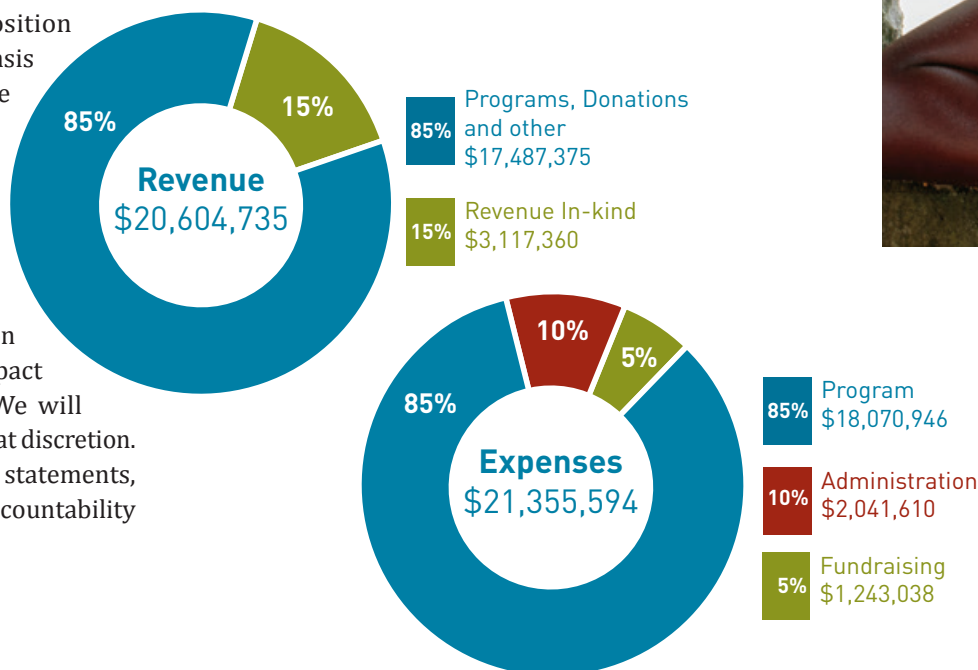
ESTATES

James Alexander Clark
 Jeroen Jacob DeZoete
 Alistair McLennan Harvey
 Miriam Jayne
 Margret Kruger
 Ursula Frances Matthews
 June Edith Murphy

OUR FINANCES

Cuso International's financial position continues to provide a secure basis for our work. As a result, we were able to invest in new and innovative program approaches and integrate our administrative operations globally. With new funding secured from the Government of Canada and a growing fundraising program that is leveraging this investment, we are on a solid foundation to deliver high-impact programming for years to come. We will continue to use our resources with great discretion.

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



HOW YOU CAN HELP

MAKE A DONATION

A small amount goes a long way at Cuso International! Every \$1 you donate is matched up to 14 times by the Government of Canada!

VOLUNTEER FOR US

Whether you are an entrepreneur, a medical professional or an educator, there are hundreds of opportunities to volunteer with us abroad and in Canada. Email us to connect your skills with a life-changing opportunity.

PHILANTHROPY

Would you like to invest in a specific cause or region such as maternal health in Ethiopia or women's empowerment in Peru? Please get in touch with us to make your transformational gift.

LEGACIES

A gift in your will provides essential development funding for Cuso International. To find out more about creating your legacy through our work, please contact us.





Top to bottom: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Nicaragua

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June 30, 2016

Your help can make a huge difference to people's lives all over the world

For more information please contact
Christine at 1.888.434.7445 x222 or
christine.woodbridge@cusointernational.org

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Cuso International is a non-profit international development organization working to improve the lives of people living with poverty and inequality around the globe. Each year we mobilize hundreds of volunteer professionals who work with local partners to create positive, lasting change. Established in 1961, Cuso International is a registered charity in Canada and the United States.

OUR VISION

A world where all people are able to realize their potential, develop their skills and participate fully in society.

OUR MISSION

Working in inclusive partnerships to overcome poverty through equitable and sustainable development.

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