

Have commitment, will travel

by Margaret Baer

Does teaching English literacy to children in Nigeria appeal to you? How about helping to establish a farmers' co-operative in Ghana? Or setting up a preventative health care system in Papua-New Guinea?

If you're searching for a meaningful commitment to Third World development, CUSO may be for you.

Since its inception in 1961 at the U of Toronto, Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) has sent over 6,500 volunteers to 66 countries. The independent, non-profit agency recruits and sends skilled Canadians overseas to participate in development programs at the local, "grassroots" level. Placements are made in response to specific requests from underdeveloped countries themselves, and the contracts are for two years (minimum).

In the past, the majority of requests have been for teachers, especially of math, science and English. Health skills have always been in high demand, too. In recent years, however, there have been less requests for formal education and more for agriculture-economics, engineering and other technological skills.

CUSO host countries are located throughout the world: West Africa, which has the most workers at present; East and Central Africa; the South Pacific; Latin America; the Caribbean; and Asia.

The host country, as an overseas employer, provides a salary comparable to local counterparts, and accommodation is either rent-free or minimal. CUSO pays all travel, medical, dental and insurance costs during the two-year placement. Salary is adequate for travel during vacations, and many volunteers travel more after their assignment is completed. While in the country, however, you live as the local people live; there is a close involvement in their way of life.

To become a CUSO worker, you must first apply through the local office, which handles initial interviews and personal investigations. After an application has been matched with a country's request, the head office in Ottawa sends the data to a Field Staff Officer who obtains approval (or rejection) from the appropriate government ministry. Once accepted at the overseas end, the volunteer attends an Orientation program in Ottawa immediately prior to assignment. The entire application process takes from four to six months, anytime during the year.

At the regional and local levels, CUSO runs pre-orientation programs - a series of meetings

held once a year in early spring, designed for both prospective and accepted volunteers. These sessions "expose and discuss general development issues and the role a Canadian can take in international development," explained Bob Schmidt, U of A Local Committee Co-ordinator. This is an aspect of CUSO's aim to increase understanding and encourage action on development. Other aspects include involvement with development and peace, the Learner Centre and the annual Third World Film Festival.

The U of A itself has given generous support to CUSO since the early 60's, providing both facilities and moral backing, with many professors involved, Schmidt said. Of the over 600 current placements, six of them

are from the U of A, with four more due to leave Edmonton within the next three months.

If you are adaptable (to things like no electricity), sensitive to the issues of development and committed to solving those issues, CUSO offers a unique opportunity for service. In addition, sharing in a very different culture forces you to discover a lot about the world and about yourself.

As Schmidt said, "For the vast majority of volunteers, it (CUSO) is a very rewarding experience; it's something that stays with you for the rest of your life."

Anyone interested should contact either Bob Schmidt or Lily Mah-Sen (Regional Co-ordinator) in Room 239, Athabasca Hall on the U of A campus.



GOALAS secretary Suseela Subbarao.

Free language lessons

by Zane Harker

The Group on Oriental and African Languages and Area Studies (GOALAS) is expanding its winter term in the hopes of attracting more students. These non-credit courses offer instruction in the languages and literatures of Africa and Asia that are not offered in the University's regular program.

These interdisciplinary studies are taught by volunteer instructors that GOALAS Secretary Suseela Subbarao describes as being "employees of the University."

"Languages are usually taught by graduate students who are natives of that language," says Subbarao.

Subbarao says that the students in the classes make up a good cross-section of the campus

population but she would like to see more interest as the courses are dependent on sufficient enrollment. Because these courses do not fall under any faculty, Subbarao feels that the student body should be made aware of the existence of these classes.

"Before, they were only known by word of mouth," she says.

There are no tuition fees for the classes but students do have to pay for books and materials which come to about ten dollars. All of the courses start at the beginner level and run from January 17 to April 30, 1983.

For more information on the language and literature courses of GOALAS, contact either S.H. Arnold, (Chairman) 432-5535 or S. Subbarao, (Secretary) 432-4652.

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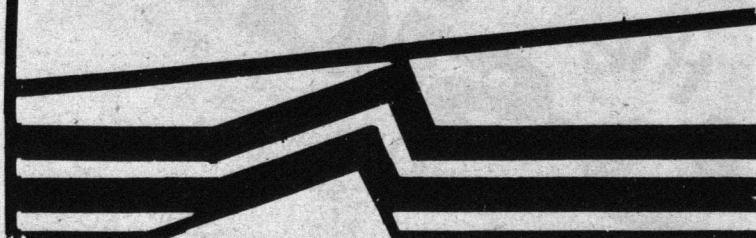
CLOSING OF NOMINATIONS:

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