

CUSO: CHALLENGE IN A CHANGING WORLD

by Dave Bullock

"We are constantly confronted with the new ways of doing things, different reactions to situations and an unusual way of conduct. Sometimes this is interesting, sometimes just frustrating, but it does make you examine your own pattern of responses."

"You do not come to a country like Ghana with the dreamy-eyed optimism that you are going to do something tremendous, and change things. You do not. You simply come here to do a job that needs doing. As for results, you don't expect anything dramatic and they may happen to surprise you."

FLEXIBILITY AND EMPATHY

"The first quality required is that he should be adaptable and flexible. He must have the ability to use his skills in totally different environments. He should be able to use whatever apparatus is available to him and not have to abandon teaching science because he has not the usual equipment."

"Another essential quality for the volunteer is empathy, which means the ability and willingness to see things from the other person's point of view. This involves a readiness to find out and understand features of the cultural, social and religious life of the colleagues among whom he works."

SERVE AND LEARN

"CUSO is the only national, non-denominational organization in Canada which undertakes to recruit any qualified Canadian graduate (and not just university-trained personnel), for two years

"Some days, you just feel like packing it all in and coming home on the next plane."

"If I can find another 12 hours in the day, I might be able to do most of the things I'd like to do."

become an integral part of their adopted community. In this way it is hoped that CUSO will help provide some of the middle-level manpower desperately needed by countries pursuing socio-economic development plans, while at the same time promoting increased understanding among the participants, as a gesture of international goodwill and cooperation."

"In order to meet the many requests from overseas countries for both technical and professional people, CUSO has expanded beyond the university campus. At the present time, 30% of Canadian volunteers are technically qualified non-university graduates. In addition to establishing Local Committees at technical schools and nursing colleges, CUSO has also searched out qualified people among the employed and the retired, people willing to trade security for the rewards of challenge. As a result, CUSO has people like Donald Lowe, a 78-year old engineer working in Uganda and 68-year old Dr. Frederick Shipman in Nigeria."

LEARN THE LANGUAGE

"CUSO is both national and international in its scope of operations. Because it is national it is bilingual. CUSO in French, is SUCO, Service Universitaire Canadien Outre-Mer, and receives many requests from such French-speaking countries as Rwanda, Tunisia, the Ivory Coast and Burundi, where SUCO French-speaking volunteers are in great demand.

But because CUSO is international it is also multi-lingual. Volunteers in Latin America must learn to speak Spanish. Those in Thailand speak Thai while those in India speak Hindi. CUSO volunteers do not go to a developing country as a representative of the Western world, or even as a representative of Canada of CUSO. They go to take their place in the life and society of a developing country. If their assignment is in Malaysia, they go as Malaysians.

CUSO exists solely for the overseas countries who at this point in their history need the help of qualified people--and who have offered CUSO an opportunity to contribute."



to "serve and learn" as a volunteer in developing countries. Volunteers are only sent abroad in response to specific requests for their services from governmental and other agencies overseas. They work under conditions of service roughly equivalent to those of their local counterparts in their host country. Volunteers are expected to

"It is generally agreed that the volunteer will gain more than he will give during his two years overseas. Beyond the increased understanding between the participating countries, CUSO also feels that it will be to the ultimate benefit of Canada to have Canadians in various professions who have had first-hand experience overseas."



"Now you owe us a visit!"

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In reality, CUSO's invitation is a challenge to all Canadians with a profession or skill, a challenge to accept the responsibility of an overseas assignment that demands individual initiative and tests individual potential. For this reason service with CUSO is two years "into" a volunteer's life, rather than two years "out of" his life.

The ultimate aim of CUSO is equality of opportunity among the nations of the world. To achieve this equality there is work to do--and volunteers are needed to do it.

CUSO can only consider Canadian citizens or landed immigrants who are, or will be, qualified graduates in their field, enjoy good health, and are willing to serve overseas for two years. CUSO has no age limit; the oldest CUSO volunteer presently overseas is 78, the youngest is 20. Ordinarily, married couples can only be considered if both the husband and wife are, or will be qualified to undertake an assignment and if they do not have any children.

As knowledge of the CUSO programme increases in the

various countries overseas, so do the requests for qualified volunteers. In its short history, CUSO has managed to considerably increase the variety of its programmes overseas. Each year CUSO enlarges its scope to include worthwhile placements for volunteers with a variety of technical skills.

At present, CUSO has over 550 graduates from universities, technical schools, nursing school, in 35 countries in Asia, East and West Africa, the Caribbean and South America.

Any takers?