

potential is there for them to come up with something more appropriate for their country."

York professor Clarence Redekop, who teaches second and fourth year International Relations, said that the trend toward tied aid is to make sure the aid benefits the Canadian economy. "Third World countries have to buy Canadian material, so it may not be good value for their money, but it's more acceptable for Canadians. Maybe the developing countries need more labour intensive aid instead of mechanized high tech aid, because it has a way of tying countries into our own technology instead of the countries receiving aid."

Whether working on a labour intensive or high tech project, Farvolden said that getting the most out of the development dollar depends on the needs of the developing country. "If you're trying to develop a global scheme, it's a bit doomed, because then you're deciding here what everybody needs, and a lot of money is going to be wasted if you try to impose things on a country."

In general, Redekop said that NGOs like CUSO are "better value for the development dollar (than larger development agencies) because a lower proportion of money is spent on salary and administrative costs and a larger amount for development assistance because they're not plugged into the salary scale of Ottawa."

In trying to be a more effective developing agency, Farvolden said that CUSO has been supporting more local non-government initiatives in the developing country. "We still work a lot with governments such as in Papua New Guinea where we place nurses in their government hospitals, and financial officers in some of their provincial governments, but more and more we're supporting fledgling non-government organizations that operate at the grassroots level and want to do something about a problem."

Although CUSO is not responsible to the government for taking directives, it is accountable to CIDA, which provides the bulk of their funding. "From the onset of a project, evaluation procedures are built in," Farvolden said. "We have regular evaluations internally by CUSO and evaluations every five years by CIDA. So, if we're not doing good work we hear about it."

Farvolden said that CUSO's six areas of overseas working areas consisting of health, technology, agriculture, business, education and renewable natural resources are fairly evenly divided in terms of placement. However, within each field, CUSO adapts its placement according to the specific needs of the host country.

A recent trend in education has been the move from classroom teaching positions to non-formal adult literacy programs at the community level. For example, Farvolden mentioned the termination of skilled classroom teachers from a large CUSO secondary school teaching program in Nigeria. "Just last year, the government of Nigeria decided they would not be bringing in foreigners any longer to teach, but would be filling the positions with locally trained people," Farvolden said. "So, a lot of countries have reached a stage where they are producing their own adequate number of teachers and see their priorities in other places in their systems or economy."

However, in some countries, Farvolden said, there is still a need to place people in classroom teaching positions, especially in the rural and isolated areas where the local people don't want to work.

In high demand are technical positions such as civil engineers needed to work with groups of villagers to help design irrigation or village water pump systems. Alison Coals and Tim Hannan are two civil engineers who are scheduled to go to Thailand in March. Both graduated with their Masters degree in civil engineering in 1985 and have less than a year working experience at a private consulting firm. However, as Coals said, "engineers seem to be in more demand than other professions. We knew we were a high priority group because CUSO advertised for engineers in the paper."

Both Coals and Hannan are looking forward to the two year CUSO posting because it will give them an opportunity to practice basic engineering skills which they wouldn't have a chance to do because of the high tech nature of engineering in Canada. "We never get to work on an entire project here—only on bits and pieces," Hannan said. "But overseas we'll get to work on the full project to the end."



We've been around long enough to know that you can't go overseas and tell people what to do and what they need. It just isn't sound development process.

enough qualifications, said he is interested in Third World development from a doer's perspective. "I want to find out how we are going about it, and if we should be doing it," he said. "These are the questions that I hope will be answered when we go overseas. The thing that concerns me about Third World development is, are we imposing Western economic ideals on countries that might not be ready for it yet? With CUSO, you get to find out what the simple man wants and needs," he added.

Hannan also said CUSO appealed to him because it "was concerned about health, food, and sanitation for poor people, whereas CIDA or the private engineering sector overseas concentrated on improving the Gross National Product and not the standard of life for the guy working in the rice paddy."

Although both Coals and Hannan have had no previous exposure to Third World countries, they have both been involved on a CIDA-sponsored project that allowed Indonesian engineers to obtain their Masters degree at the University of Manitoba. "We acted as English tutors, helping them with the language," Coals said.

To help prospective cooperants decide if they think they are prepared to make the two year CUSO commitment, Farvolden said that CUSO "tries to put resources at their disposal that help them decide if they are really doing the right thing for themselves." The selection process for CUSO is quite intensive, involving anywhere from a six month to a year period to allow adequate time to send material back and forth from Canada to the host country about the prospective CUSO cooperant. "Six months is also a good time for people to sort things out," Farvolden added. "Over time we may see people who we feel wouldn't be right for CUSO, so we deselect them too."

In addition to putting resources at the candidate's disposal, Farvolden also said CUSO encourages people to talk with others who've worked in that country overseas, and most importantly asks them to take a hard look at their personal characteristics to decide if the CUSO posting is for them. "It's an odd thing to do," he said. "Not a lot of people do it, so we don't want people to make mistakes—the most important selection is the selection they do themselves. It's very hard on an individual and CUSO when someone goes to a place then realizes, 'Gee, I've made a big mistake'."

Farvolden said that the host agency in the overseas country makes the ultimate selection decision from a large dossier of information CUSO sends them. Out of the 50 resumés CUSO may receive, he said, "probably 10 or 15 would have the right qualifications we're looking for, and maybe one would actually go overseas. Although some people do break CUSO contracts," Farvolden said, "it's less than 10 percent."

Coals, who applied along with Hannan for CUSO when they were still living in Manitoba (they moved to Ottawa in July, 1986), said that they had some communication problems with their application process. Although they were accepted by CUSO in February 1986, they didn't know if they were accepted by their host country Thailand until last October. "The eight-month waiting period obviously caused some anxiety," she said. Coals said that originally they were to go to Mozambique, but due to political destabilizing factors, CUSO had put a freeze on cooperant placement.

Despite his general excitement about going to Thailand, Hannan is still a bit apprehensive. "Some people do fail," he said. "We're told that the highest failure rate is between couples. We're making a serious commitment by dropping our careers here to go overseas." However, he added, "I think it will be a very fascinating experience personally. I'll gain cultural experience and get to see the country other than a tourist would."

Coals shared the same twinges of apprehension as Hannan, but "nothing that scared her out of going," she said. "You have to go with the feeling that it is your experience," she added.

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Recent CUSO cooperants Don and Jennifer Coles returned from Nicaragua in December with the feeling that their experience strengthened their relationship. "We went away with a lot of fear, but because of the fewer social networks there, we spent more time together," Don said. Jennifer, who taught high school for two years, and also has a Masters in Environmental Studies at York, was placed as a trainer

in occupational health and safety for Nicaragua's Ministry of Labour. After her two year contract with CUSO terminated in March 1986, Jennifer stayed on as an unpaid volunteer for the remaining eight months.

Don, who is a doctor, worked with CUSO for one year as an occupational physician for the Ministry of Health, in both health centres and agricultural fields testing and treating workers and their families for things such as exposure to pesticides. In addition, he educated workers in work-related diseases. "I saw things like mercury and lead poisoning amongst the workers," he said.

Because pesticides were a major identifiable problem, Coles left CUSO after the first year to work on a pesticide project with the Department of Health and Safety funded by Oxfam and Development and Peace. "I did keep up my link with CUSO by arranging to set up a project with CUSO and Oxfam working on a pesticide project in the tobacco sector," he said.

Although both Jennifer and Don were satisfied with the CUSO orientation and information period prior to their departure, he said that it never can totally prepare you (for going to a Third World Country). "Underdevelopment is a lot more frustrating than I thought," he said. "It's just not a lack of physical resources, but a lack of trained people," he added. As a result, Don said that although he was very pleased with the level of involvement he and Jennifer made at the community level, there was a lack of skilled local people. "There were so few trained people that it tended to frustrate other initiatives," he said. "They may have been administrators, but they were poor ones; but there was nobody else to do it. As a result it made our job harder."

Don also said he realized that even a two-year work period in a Third World country is too short of a time to see big changes. "Although personally I thought we accomplished a lot," he said, "things move much slower on the whole. The infrastructure is not as efficient (as in Canada), so there were a lot of delays, from waiting for things to arrive in the mail to an overall slower operational process. Don also mentioned other frustrating delays such as delays running out of small supplies like typewriter ribbons and paper."

Another factor that made the development process slower, Don said, was the general drain in the country because of the ongoing war between the Contras and the Sandinistas. "We felt the political tension not so much in the day to day work, but in the general cutbacks of resources in the country," he said. "The economy was skewed to a war economy, so it makes the whole development process that much more difficult. Development is not the first priority in war times, survival is."

Farvolden agreed that countries can be more difficult to work in when there is outside destabilizing factors such as in Mozambique and Nicaragua. "They can be difficult, strenuous countries to work in because of these factors, but we try to work more with the people in the countries that are excluded from the benefits that the society offers," he said. "As long as the government doesn't object to us working there—and it doesn't—we continue to work with the poorer people in the country."

Farvolden added that if CUSO members are overtly involved in political risky activities in a country, CUSO will put an end to it and send them home. "Most work is political by its very nature because you're working with the poorest people. It is a political activity, but it is an allowable one; but when you go beyond the boundaries (of the CUSO commitment to improve the lives of the impoverished) you're jeopardizing your own safety and the safety of the people you work with," he said. "There can be a lot of potential for problems, but our fieldstaff is very experienced and sensitive to that. A lot of grassroots /community level organizations are started up because the government isn't taking care of the problem itself, so there's certainly a potential for conflict, but we don't want to jeopardize these programs so we tread very carefully."

While CUSO continually works to improve its efforts as a developing agency overseas, Farvolden said that another CUSO priority is to educate Canadians at home about the global inequalities and urge them to take a more realistic look at Third World countries. "Canadians will always have a role to play in development both abroad and at home by working for justice in Canada or international justice overseas."