

PARTNER NEWSLETTER

PROGRAM INFORMATION AND NEWS OF CUSO INTERNATIONAL IN THE CARIBBEAN, CENTRAL AMERICA AND ANDEAN REGIONS.



ISSUE #1—MARCH 2014

HELP THEM HOPE PERU
WOMEN'S BUSINESS
E-MENTORING PILOT PROJECT
JAMAICA DIASPORA INSTITUTE
OTHER NEWS

PAGE 2
PAGE 3
PAGE 3
PAGE 4
PAGE 5

CUSO
International



HELP THEM HOPE

SUPPORTING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN PERU

The name says it all; Help Them HOPE. This small, yet dynamic nongovernmental organization strives to empower persons with disabilities through education, gainful employment and independent living. Their dream? A society in which persons with disabilities – some 3.5 million people across Peru – can realize their full potential, and advocate for change. Currently, the exclusion of persons with disabilities from employment leads to marginalization and poverty, and comes with a cost estimated at between 3 and 7 per cent of Peru’s GDP.

HOPE is based in Lima, a sprawling and chaotic metropolis, but also supports youth – over 200 since 2009 – in the Andes Mountains and in Peru’s arid, coastal desert. The organization is the heart and spirit of the incipient Independent Living movement in Peru, which stems from the fundamental principle that persons with disabilities are entitled to inalienable rights, self-determination, self-respect and opportunities as persons without disabilities. Sadly, over 20 per cent of Peruvians with disabilities (and up to 50 per cent in some regions!) lack access to any type of formal education.

HOPE also means innovation. The organization’s In-



Top row left to right: Nilson Nilson Cercado, program coordinator, Florestan Fillon, Independent Living program developer, John Whelan, director of Help Them Hope, and David Owens, a local volunteer. Bottom row left to right: Josée Labbé, development coordinator, Elisa Gavidia administrator, and Heather Nicole Platter, operations manager.

clusive Employment Program, or YAPAYKUY (which means inclusion in Quechua, the ancient language of the Inca), helps employers comply with Peru’s new Disability Law, which sets fixed quotas for hiring persons with disabilities. It also directly recruits such persons through career fairs, for example, while providing them with vocational guidance and training to support their academic and professional development. Yet another step in the right direction!

“We wanted highly-qualified volunteers to bring added value to our team,” says John Whelan, director of HOPE. *And they have.*

Josée Labbé, from Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Canada, is working on ways to improve resource mobilization and fundraising; and Florestan Fillon, from Ottawa, Canada, is leading HOPE's Independent Living research and contributing to the development of new projects under this program.

“These volunteers have created a profound impact on our work; we have reached a greater number of persons with disabilities, while improving program sustainability,” says Whelan.

For more information please visit helptemhope.org or contact Annie Thériault, program development and comms officer Peru, annie.theriault@cuso-lac.org



Top left to right: Eley Valenzuela, service recipient, Jeny Vega service recipient, Lizette Reyes Vargas, intern, Jordan Rosales, service recipient, Gladys Mujica, board of directors, Wilver Alva, service recipient, Lorena Ubillus, volunteer, Noel Conway, volunteer, Maurizio Chiarella, board of directors, friend of service recipient Violeta Peche, Renato “RJ” Rongcal, volunteer, Heather Nicole Platter, operations manager. Bottom row, left to right: Jaime Huerta, board of directors, Jackeline Martinez, service recipient, Violeta Peche, service recipient, Ivet Coora, service recipient, Jaime Campomanes, service recipient, José Labbé, development coordinator. Middle Bottom: Brother of service recipient Jordan Rosales.



WOMEN'S BUSINESS

MULTIPLE WINS AT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARDS

Young businesswoman Ebelín P. Solorzano (Peru), the Pomerom Women's Agro-Processors Association (Guyana), and women-led co-op Mishky Cacao (Peru) secured first, second and third place at the recently concluded Regional Entrepreneurship Awards Scheme, sponsored by global consulting firm Accenture (UK).

The awards scheme, designed to reward outstanding entrepreneurship initiatives which have contributed to poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods, is part of the *Making Markets Work* project jointly being implemented by Cuso International and VSO in Guyana.

For more information please email Melanie McTurk, program support officer Accenture project Guyana, melanie.mcturk@cuso-lac.org

E-MENTORING PILOT PROJECT

LAUNCHED WITH DIASPORA COMMUNITIES IN TORONTO

The innovative e-project, devised by Cuso International and the Alliance of Jamaican Alumni Associations (AJAA), was launched mid-February in Toronto, Canada. As part of Cuso International's "Diaspora for Development" initiative, it will mobilize diaspora communities to address human resources gaps.

Mentors will partner with mentees through Skype for a minimum of two hours weekly during the six-month pilot for Grades 9-12 students that runs until the end of June. Through online guidance and support, the project aims to improve academic performance and leadership qualities of students who are not excelling academically, or are on the verge of quitting high school.

“Social and economic inclusion of young people is a key focus for our work throughout the Caribbean and this project gives them the skills and support they need for a brighter future,” says Cuso International's executive director, Derek Evans.

For more information please email Chiara Marazzan, Latin America and the Caribbean diaspora coordinator chiara.marazzan@cusointernational.org



JOY-ANNE HEADLEY

JAMAICA DIASPORA INSTITUTE (JDI)

Cuso International's volunteers work with local communities to help them become more self-sufficient and resilient.

Meet Joy-Anne Headley. This first-time Cuso International volunteer from Barbados, a small developing island state in the Caribbean, is currently volunteering with the Jamaica Diaspora Institute (JDI). Her role, as program development coordinator, includes program planning and organisational capacity-building. Upbeat and a driven problem-solver, Joy-Anne is a social worker who has worked across South-East Asia and the Caribbean, and has experience in gender equality, domestic violence prevention, and community organizing.

JDI, through the Diaspora Youth Connect (DYC) Project, works with partner organisations to mobilize members of the Jamaican Diaspora to support youth entrepreneurs in 8 at-risk inner city communities in Kingston, Jamaica. These youth, faced with the burgeoning effects of unemployment, benefit from access to resources and opportunities that support the sustainability of their entrepreneurial pursuits.

"I believe the greatest impact of my work includes contributing to 'foundation building' and networking to broaden the quality and reach of services provided to young entrepreneurs," says Headley.

For more information please email Tarik Perkins, country representative Jamaica, tarik.perkins@cuso-lac.org



Joy-Anne Headley

The Cuso International volunteer at the *Regional Training of Trainers Workshop*, sponsored by YABT, UNDP and the Mashav Institute of Israel.

DYC PROJECT LAUNCH

Nearly 120 people, from a cross section of key stakeholders, including youth, Jamaican Diaspora, community-based organizations, private sector representatives, and dignitaries, such as Mr. Robert Ready, Canadian High Commission to Jamaica, attended the DYC Project launch, which was held at the end of 2013. "The DYC is an exceptional initiative geared towards making a difference in inner-city communities in Jamaica," said Portia Simpson Miller, Prime Minister of Jamaica.



Jamaican PM Portia Simpson-Miller with Cuso International staff Tarik Perkins.

THANK YOU

Joy-Anne is deeply grateful to M. Manderson and Professor N. Ying, JDI's executive director, "for the opportunity to learn from his wisdom and years of experience in the Jamaican public and private sectors."

"They trusted my ability to achieve the tasks set before me and created new learning opportunities," says Headley. "This life-changing journey has both strengthened my skills and challenged me," she adds.



M. Manderson and Professor N. Ying, JDI's executive director.

OTHER NEWS

NV PARTNER WORKSHOP 13-14 FEBRUARY, HONDURAS

The Honduran Cuso Program Office brought together partners and stakeholders for a two-day workshop to discuss national volunteering and explore avenues for cooperation. Tools for volunteer recruitment and management were shared, and participants agreed that volunteering constitutes a positive force for change, and a cost-effective and empowering way of leveraging the skills of a country's own citizens to support development.

Contact Cecilia Sanchez program support officer Honduras, cecilia.sanchez@cuso-lac.org for more information

MODEL FOREST NETWORK 17-22 MARCH, ECUADOR

Some 40 Model Forest representatives from Latin America, Canada, Italy and Spain gathered in Ecuador in March to share lessons learned, best practices and strategies pertaining to the sustainability of Model Forests and knowledge management, among others. Moreover, the Model Forest experience, a broad-based partnership for sustainable forest management, was presented to Ecuadorian authorities and community leaders.

Visit bosquesmodelo.net for more information or email Kate Roberts, HoP Central America, kate.roberts@cuso-lac.org

GENDER EQUALITY 8TH MARCH

Women's equality has made positive gains but the world is still unequal. International Women's Day celebrates the social, political and economic achievements of women while focusing world attention on areas requiring further action.

Staff, volunteers and partners joined Cuso International's commitment to promoting gender equity this month by making photographic gender pledges they would work on in the coming year.

Click here to view our pledges: <http://cusointernational.org/content/gender-equity-pledges>



Interested in learning more about partnerships with Cuso International?
Please email questions@cusointernational.org or visit cusointernational.org