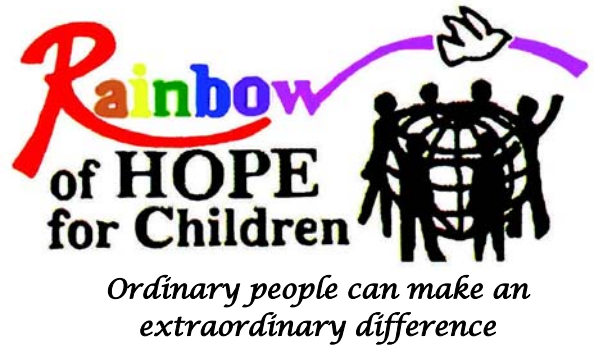


NEXUS

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Includes Annual Report



A Monitoring Trip to Nepal by Connie and Vicki Gerwing



We are seven on the first monitoring trip to Nepal by a Rainbow of Hope group. Travelling singly and in small groups we make our way to Kathmandu in late September. By the second evening we all get to the same place, a rooftop patio in the middle of the Thamel area of the city.

There is an 11:45 time difference from our homes on the prairies, a half day ahead of home which continues to confuse as we try to stay in touch with our friends and families. Why the odd 15 minutes? No one in Nepal seems to know.

Charles Matt, Connie Gerwing, George Bunz, Vera Hay and Joe Gubbels are first timers. Patrick Hessel is the project coordinator from our board and has been to Nepal with Habitat for Humanity and on trekking trips several times.

Vicki Gerwing, one of the group, was in Nepal in 1977 and hasn't been back for 41 years.

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A monitoring trip to Nepal cont..

The differences from the 1970's to now are many but there are also many familiar features. The population of Nepal was about 13 million in 1977 and is about 29 million in 2018. Kathmandu and area now has 2.5 million people. In 1977 it was much smaller, but it's still a city of narrow streets, brilliantly coloured market stalls and shops, and crowds of people in the streets comfortably moving around each other, shopping, chatting and eating.



The busy streets of Kathmandu

The Buddhist influence gives the people a live and let live approach to life. The three central squares with their temples, palaces and monuments are still there but badly damaged by the 2015 earthquake and often under repair.

Kathmandu had almost a remote and rural feel to it in 1977. Just outside the city were rice fields and harvest was done by hand, pounding the rice then grinding it into flour



Sewing shop in Jibajibe



Patrick, Charlie and Hari's nephew Ram with Suryodaya School students



Senator Mohan Acharya gives President Charles Matt a plaque.

using water wheels. The winter air in November and December of 1977 was crisp and clean. Vicki remembers a man in one of their hostels getting up throughout the night to light a coal fire to keep the place warm. Life in Nepal was cheap and it was a favourite stop for travelers and the hippies who drove from London to Australia across the Middle East in those years. There were

American pie shops are everywhere—an odd sight in South Asia in the 70s, although the pies were usually a disappointment. There are none left now, but living is still cheap and travellers now fly in to trek in the mountains.

The traffic is a big change. It's terrible. The roads are narrow. Sometimes two small cars can barely pass inches from the cement walls of the buildings. Few sidewalks mean that people and cars share the roads except on the widest thoroughfares and those are rare. The 2015 earthquakes damaged the roads as well as buildings. The familiar rings and dings of cellphones are everywhere now. Nepali's speak loudly into their phones, preferring to talk to each other rather than text. Asian tourists, particularly the many Chinese, take selfies everywhere. The dust and pollution from the traffic and congestion hang in the air of the Kathmandu valley as a brown haze.

After a couple of days of orientation and touring to try and understand the culture, the education system, the status of women and girls, and the food, we head north to Jibajibe. Here Rainbow of Hope has worked with a local charity, the High Himalayan Community Project, run by Harikrishna Devkotah to build a school in an area seriously damaged by the 2015 earthquake. The monsoon season, which is just over, was a long and heavy one and landslides in various places mean we have to take a longer route. The roads deteriorate quickly from poor pavement to gravel and rock. The roads narrow too, clinging to the side of mountains with switchbacks that sometimes require the vehicles to back up to make the tight corner. We lurch and rock from side to side as we climb high above rivers and through towns and villages clinging to

the mountainsides. A damaged radiator hose stops us for an hour or so and we arrive in late afternoon to Hari's family home where they warmly welcome us with food and beds. This is our home for the next 5 days while we visit the school that ROHFC built and explore other areas of need. Rural areas have experienced much less change since the 1970's than the Kathmandu Valley.

There is a grand opening of the Suryodaya School built by Rainbow of Hope for Children on Sunday, September 30. The school has five small classrooms and is built of concrete reinforced by rebar to withstand earthquakes. It clings to the side of the mountains like most of the buildings in this area (see front page).

We walked about half a kilometer down the switchbacked road and were greeted with flowers, scarves draped around our necks, and many “namaste’s”, which is their traditional greeting accompanied by hands together as if in prayer. There are local and national government dignitaries there and many from the local schools and educational administration. Everyone gets to make a speech in Nepali. The children dance for us. The families and children, colourful in their best clothes, sit and stand patiently throughout the three-hour process. We are thanked with words and gifts. We snap photos and drink lots of water and take it all in.

Over the course of the next few days we visit several

future projects. There is a lot of interest in planning a post-secondary technical school to teach agricultural programs and a Veterinary Tech program, with the intention of expanding to other trades and technical programs in the future. We examine a potential building site for the school on a steep slope. They don’t often build one big building here but several, each one on a different level to work with the terraces that are everywhere on the mountains. This will be a large project and other partners are necessary but Hari is working on a proposal for that which he will present to us over the next few months.

We head back to the noise and confusion of Kathmandu on October 4. The roads feel more familiar and we are better prepared for the ride and the need for motion sickness medication for some of us. We head off to our various activities, some trekking, and some sight-seeing. Over the next week we also meet with some local people and Canadians, some who work with other NGO’s in Nepal. Some are with Medical Mercy Canada—a group



Vicki Gerwing walking on mountain road



Students at the temporary school at Ghormu.



Hari and his Dad

more schools, the local hospital, and the village. We walk up and down those mountains getting more accustomed to the altitude, heat and humidity. One long walk takes us to the village of Ghormu, near the epicenter of one of the earthquakes. The local school was destroyed and a new one is being built with private funding using more earthquake-proof methods. Meanwhile they are using a temporary structure made from corrugated metal roofing materials. ROHFC will consider proposals from this area to replace other schools.

Hari has many great ideas for projects to improve the educational options for the local children and we have more informal discussions with community leaders about

who built a secondary school for girls in Lumbini in the southwest part of the country, and also a Nepali agroecology specialist from Pokhara who works with USC Canada but in his home country.

Monitoring is about more than visiting our own project in a country. It is about understanding the place in which we are working so we can best serve the people who live there, and about making connections with other groups and agencies working there too, whether they are local or international. Sharing ideas and learning about and appreciating the culture, traditions, and needs of the country are essential for board members and others who support our projects throughout the world. ❖



Nepal is the only country in the world with a non-rectangular flag. Nepal’s flag is maroon colored with two triangular shapes stacked on one another with dark blue border. The upper triangle consists of the moon and the lower triangle consists of the sun. The current flag has been in place since 1962, although the basic design has been used for over 2,000 years in Nepal.

RAINBOW-CIS YOUTH FORMATION AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM ISLA EL ESPIRITU SANTO, EL SALVADOR

By George Bunz

For most of us in Canada, it is hard to imagine youth not able to attend a high school. Upon graduating, our youth have several



Congratulations Zunita, Brian & Kevin, our 2017 High school graduates.

options—universities, colleges, or entering the workforce. For youth on Isla El Espiritu Santo, about a half-hour boat ride to the coast of El Salvador mainland, there is no high school and no opportunities for work. Here the residents have only a primary school and before the scholarship program, only two youth had ever traveled to the mainland to attend high school. Isla El Espiritu Santo is one of 19 communities where

our partner, Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad (CIS), meaning Centre for Friendship and Exchange, offers a formation and scholarship program for disadvantaged students in El Salvador.

CIS is a multifaceted non-profit organization with programs supporting education, organizing, and social justice. Its mission is to promote solidarity and cultural exchange among the Salvadoran people and others in search of dignity and respect. It does remarkable work in a country still healing from the ravages of the civil war from 1980 to 1992. CIS started its first scholarship program in 1997 at Cinquera, Cabañas.

Cinquera was the centre of the bombing during the war and no one went to high school before or during the war. Now a historical park, I first visited Cinquera in 2004 with a group of university students who had been Rainbow of Hope student volunteers in Wainwright. After trekking up steep switchback trails, we rested at the “hospital” which was an opening in the forest where injured guerillas received treatment for their wounds. Here the park ranger told us, “These trees protected us and took bullets for us when the army was bombing us.”

It was at Cinquera that a young man, Antonio, had wanted to become a doctor, but he had to go to war. When the war ended, Antonio suffered many physical ailments, and because his family had no money for him to

travel to school, he was unable to fulfill his dream. Tragically, he took his own life. Moved by this sad story,



CIS developed a youth formation and scholarship program that paid the transportation costs for Cinquera youth to attend junior high school in neighbouring municipalities. Today, the formation and scholarship program has blossomed to 228 disadvantaged youth attending school and 159 attending university—14 graduating from university and 85 from high school in 2017.

What is the objective of the Youth Formation and Scholarship Program? It is to ensure that economically disadvantaged youth have access to high school and university education and reach a level of social awareness, contributing to the development and transformation of their communities.



Why formation? For CIS and its partners like Rainbow of Hope for Children Society, education is not just about formal schooling. Education is about learning of one’s connectedness with the world and becoming protagonists in one’s reality. It is to be committed to social

justice, to self-determination, and to transforming themselves and their community. Each student is required to participate in retreats and a yearly service project that contributes to local community development.

Why scholarships? We Canadians tend to identify scholarships as deserving gifts to the privileged, available to the highest academic achievers. In El Salvador, there are no schools in many villages and towns. Many families do not have enough money to pay for transportation, tuition, books and supplies and there are no government programs for loans. While academic achievement obviously is a criterion in El Salvador, the primary focus of scholarships is to help financially disadvantaged youth, especially girls, to get a higher education to enable career opportunities and holistic formation to improve their lives, as well as their communities and their country.



Congratulations to Elika, 1st university graduate from Isla El Espiritu Santo.

How are students selected for the program? CIS organizes scholarship selection committees in each community who select students based on these criteria: 1. Economic need, 2. Commitment to social justice, 3. At least 50% female, 4. Achievement in the case of university scholarships.

CIS looks for trustworthy partner organizations committed to social justice and approached Rainbow of Hope during our visit in October 2011. They told us of the low-income families on Isla El Espiritu Santo who desperately wished their children to attend high school and university on the mainland. Would we fund the cost of their daily boat ride, tuition and a living stipend? The average cost was \$300 USD per high school student and \$1,200 USD per university student. Buoyed by the optimism of our late treasurer, Richard Forer, and our respect for CIS, we started our program for the Island's youth January 1, 2014.

In November 2016, our Rainbow of Hope monitoring team visited Isla El Espiritu Santo. We wobbled into the boat, two to each seat, helped by the steady hand of the driver and our CIS guide, and sped off on the blue Pacific. A half hour later, we slowed down and entered a pristine passageway toward the dock, greeted by beautiful birds along the shore and 14 waving scholarship students. They invited us to their small community centre where they shared their struggles with finances and gang violence.

They shared their hopes and career dreams.

They talked about friends dropping out of school



because of increasing gang violence, still in shock from the brutal murder in 2014 of Denis, a scholarship student in his fifth year of architecture. It is believed that he was going for tutoring with his professor, took a short cut, and walked through turf controlled by a gang.

It was only on our return boat ride that we realized something was not quite right; there were no life jackets. In June 2017, while attending the celebration of the success of the 5-year COMUS Sustainable Coffee Project compliments of Global Affairs Canada, our new president, Charles Matt, and I visited the island again with Leslie Schuld, the CEO of CIS, and brought a boatload of lifejackets. The students were puzzled. Life jackets were not part of their culture and the question arose who would ever wear them. Then one of the girls gleefully said, "We could hold a fashion show". A burst of laughter and life jackets are now the in-fashion boat wear to school and university.



We at Rainbow of Hope for Children encourage the students of Isla El Espiritu Santo to remain in school, to study hard, to reach deep into the centre of your being, and "will" your dreams to fulfillment. ❖

ROHFC Annual Report By Charlie Matt, President

I am pleased to present my first report to the membership as president of the ROHFC. This first year has been one of learning, growing, listening, and consulting. George Bunz, past president for many years, has been very supportive during my transition into this role. I do not want to mislead anyone into thinking I have learned every aspect and nuance of what the president does. Gosh no, there is so much to it.

One of the aspects I enjoy most is meeting with new people from countries around the world and becoming a friend to them. Sometimes it is just by email, but the bonding and respect begins when we (ROHFC) can provide people with a hand up. I respect George's associations with all of these people so much.

One of the highlights of my year, besides becoming president of the ROHFC, was meeting with the Canadian Ambassador to El Salvador at the celebration of the COMUS coffee project completion in June 2017. The celebration was attended by many Salvadorian dignitaries and the project is now in the hands of the local people who have also invested so much of themselves into it to create better outcomes for their livelihoods and families. Congratulations to Clara Qualizza, along with her husband, for their leadership and five-year commitment in making this project such a success.

I must recognize and thank the Directors of Rainbow of Hope who are so dedicated to the countries and projects they have taken on. Each one has seen something special in that country and has taken on a challenge to help. My total admiration and respect to each and every one of them.

The Rainbow of Hope had many projects in various stages of fulfillment during the 2017-18 year. We are active in many countries.

- **El Salvador:** Finished up the administrative work for the COMUS Project; completion of one El Sauce Mini-Farm project and renewal of a succeeding project (talk about train the trainer—the kids are now teaching their juniors), two successful CIS Scholarship Projects.
- **Peru:** Education Complex Operation & Maintenance—training adults, Disaster Relief Housing project building homes for the flood stricken, and ECO-Toilets project providing sanitation.
- **Brazil:** MMTRP-AI Water Storage project
- **Ghana:** Health, Nutrition and Sanitation Project in the schools.
- **Kenya:** Nzavoni School Building project, Kinyambu Library and school fence project.
- **Tanzania:** Ussongo School Water Storage project, Ussongo Daughters of Mary Classrooms project.
- **Nepal:** Shree Suryodaya Primary School project rebuilding after the devastating earthquakes.

We must acknowledge the many warm and caring individual supporters who continue to help the Rainbow of Hope for Children Society make a difference in the lives of the many people in the countries we strive to assist. Your service and support is dearly needed and deeply appreciated. We cannot forget the funding support from Global Affairs Canada, and especially Alberta CIP-ID and the many community organizations for their grants.

Thank you all so very much for your giving and caring, ❖



Learn how to make a difference COMMUNITY-DRIVEN (CDD) COURSE IN INDIA



SOPAR, a Canadian-based international development organization, offers English-speaking Canadians the opportunity to participate in a community development 4-week training course at the People Development Training Center in Warangal, Telangana State, India. The training is open to anyone who is passionate about helping others, wants to deepen their knowledge of development and gain practical skills while living a unique cultural experience.

The next training begins in January. Participants will pay \$1000 to cover training costs (courses, accommodation, three meals a day, field trips). Airfare, vaccination, insurance, visa and personal expenses are not included.

To apply, send your resume and a letter of interest to SOPAR@SOPAR.CA

For more information visit the website www.sopar.ca

INSIDE RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN

RAINBOW OF HOPE FOR CHILDREN SOCIETY Statement of Revenues and Expenditures Year Ended March 31, 2018

	2018	2017
REVENUES		
Donations (Note 10)	\$ 235,938	\$ 216,567
Federal government grants	154,685	194,240
Provincial government grants	38,730	11,270
	429,353	422,077
EXPENSES		
El Salvador	107,818	321,141
Peru	68,000	60,202
Kenya	36,825	5,000
Tanzania	29,755	2,000
Project administration	24,284	25,159
Project monitoring	17,503	29,721
Nepal	15,749	-
Public participation	8,749	10,988
Ghana	6,000	3,000
Brazil	1,500	28,176
Bali	-	1,355
	316,183	486,742
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FROM OPERATIONS	113,170	(64,665)
OTHER INCOME		
Interest income	4,349	4,884
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 117,519	\$ (59,781)

A copy of the full audited statement is available from Treasurer Cherry Dumalagan at 604-308-7783 or dumalagancherry@gmail.com

In addition to the above, the amounts donated back by Rainbow of Hope directors and monitoring teams were:

Administration:	\$ 3850.00	Net administration is	\$(1089.87)
Monitoring:	\$21455.36	Net monitoring is	\$4494.66
Public Engagement	\$8125.49	Net public engagement	\$7125.80

A NEW BOARD MEMBER: VERA HAY

I was born in Ireland where I trained as a registered nurse. After getting married, myself, my husband Kevin, and son Philip immigrated to Canada. We spent our first year in La Ronge in Saskatchewan after which we moved to Wainwright, Alberta. Thereafter two more children arrived, Barry and Emily. We have remained in Wainwright and are happy to call it and Canada our home. Over the years I have volunteered in various groups in our community, church and school. It was through our school that we first heard of Rainbow of Hope for Children. Kevin and I became supporters and admirers of all the work the organization has been doing over the years. I am delighted to now join the board. On my first monitoring trip to Nepal recently I was again impressed with the work and the dedication of those involved. It was lovely to meet the local people and see the significant impact that our organization has in their communities. The trip also allowed us as a group to form closer bonds and friendships. I am looking forward to being involved in other ongoing projects and sharing new adventures with Rainbow of Hope.





OFFICERS

President: Charles Matt, Saskatoon, SK
V-President: Peter Van Winssen, Wainwright, AB
Secretary: Clara Qualizza, Wildwood, AB
Treasurer: Cherry Dumalagan, Surrey, BC

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Gilles Verret, Edmonton, AB
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NOTE:
When making a donation using a credit card be sure to include the 3-digit security code on the back of your card. That number is now required by the credit card companies.

RAINBOW OF HOPE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF:



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Government of Alberta, CIP - International Development

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• Sharon Romanow and her leadership students at Blessed Sacrament School in Wainwright for helping prepare the NEXUS mail out.
• The Peter Van Winssen Professional Corporation, Wainwright, Alberta for donating the cost of the NEXUS mail-out.

Thank you to all our donors, several Rotary Clubs and Knights of Columbus, Edmonton Community Foundation, and the Al Gerwing Charitable Foundation.

We thank you for offering a gift to one of these projects and are pleased to acknowledged your donation with an income tax deductible receipt. Kindly send your donation to:

RAINBOW OF HOPE
WAINWRIGHT, AB T9W 1S7
PO BOX 2883

Registered Charity No: 889160172-RR0001
www.rainbowofhopeforchildren.ca

Donations of securities is a significant tax advantage; to donate shares please contact our Treasurer at dumalagancherry@gmail.com or 604-308-7783.

Thank you all for your support.

PROGRAM OF RAINBOW OF HOPE

1. Eye health care, reducing avoidable blindness, Indonesia
2. Casa Ambrosina young women’s capacitation, Brazil
3. School of family agriculture, Bahia, Brazil
4. PREDA protecting children, Philippines
5. El Sauce School organic agriculture, El Salvador
6. Nepal Schools, Nepal
7. Rainbow-CIS Scholarship Program, El Salvador
8. Public Education Complex, Peru
9. PAMBE La’angum School, Ghana education, nutrition and health
10. Kinyambu area projects, Kenya
11. Bilingual Bicultural College, Cunen, Guatemala
12. Ussongo Primary School, Tanzania
13. Daughters of Mary Projects, Tanzania
14. Disaster relief fund
15. Undesignated: where most needed



NEXUS: Produced and edited by Connie Gerwing and Jan Schmitz in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and Rainbow of Hope’s Head Office in Wainwright, Alberta, Canada. The expressed views of the authors are not necessarily the views of the NGO.