



**IVCO**  
MONTRÉAL 2018



**OXFAM**  
Québec

forum

**SUCO**

*Volunteer cooperation in a period of crisis:  
Our experience in Nicaragua*

Cuso International

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## **Our Vision**

A world where all people are able to realize their potential, develop their skills and participate fully in society.

## **Our Mission**

Reduce poverty and inequality through the efforts of volunteers, partners and donors.



# **2015: A very good transition year!**



## Link with Innovation and Safeguarding Session Objectives

- Allow agencies to share their framework for security operations excellence
- Allow agencies to share the work being done to ensure inclusive and responsible safety and security practices
- How can IVCOs work more effectively together to share resources



# Case Study - Introduction



**April 2018:** Cuso International had 20 local partners, 5 staff, 24 volunteers, and 1 accompanying partner in Nicaragua.

- **16 April:** Introduction of pension reform
- **16-24 April:** Civil unrest starts
- **21-27 April:** Volunteers re-located to Managua
- **27 April:** Cuso Security Management Team (CSMT) approves preventive evacuation of international volunteers from April 27 to May 11
- **4 May:** CSMT extends evacuation AND approves potential return to Nicaragua
- **16 May:** CSMT terminates all volunteers' placements and temporally closes the Nicaragua Country Program Office
- **17 May:** Program on hold
- **18 September:** Country program office scale down



## Crisis

- Unknown and uncontrollable variables
- High stress and high stakes
- Numerous stakeholders involved
- Several layers of impact

## Mitigation Strategy

- Well defined procedures
- Well trained/prepared staff
- Timely and effective communication and coordination with internal and external stakeholders



# Lessons learned / Changes



- Streamlined emergency procedures, guidelines and protocols
- Reviewed our volunteer agreement
- Training delivered on evacuation scenarios
- Reviewed Contribution Agreement with our funders
- Re-assessed security considerations in project proposals



# Conclusion



- Have your organization experienced similar situations? Were you adequately prepared?
- Are you better prepared now? Can you share learnings or recommendations with the group?
- How can we ensure the safety and security of our volunteers while respecting our obligations towards our partners?

