

## CCA COACHES GIVE BACK WHEN THEY GET BACK

CCA sends over 30 volunteer coaches to Malawi, Uganda, Ghana and Mongolia each year to help credit unions work through their challenges. CCA credit union coaches wear two hats when they take up their assignments, one as seasoned professionals sharing knowledge and skills with the credit unions they visit, and another as communicators, gathering and shaping the stories they will eventually tell colleagues, family and friends when they return to Canada.

In 2011–2012, CCA international development volunteers made 84 presentations to more than 4,000 Canadians; their experiences generated 61 newspaper or newsletter articles, 18 blogs, two television interviews and a radio interview as well as numerous Facebook and Twitter posts.

CCA coaches say telling their stories is a way of giving back for the privilege of working with credit unions in Africa and Asia. It also helps Canadians see how their support to CCA and the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada is helping people continents away move out of poverty.

How they choose to share their overseas experience with others is a very personal thing. "The message at the core of each of my talks is to be mindful of how fortunate we are in Canada, and to reach out to those who need our help no matter how far away they may be," says Leading Edge Credit Union CEO

Cory Munden. In 2010 he visited credit unions in Ghana as a volunteer CCA coach. He returned to Africa in January 2012 to coach credit unions in Uganda.

Like many CCA coaches, Cory arranges to speak to a wide assortment of service clubs and community groups, as well as to his own staff and board. He has a keen desire to share his stories in schools, where he poses the same question to each class.

"I say: *raise your hand if you want to go to Africa.* They all raise their hands. *Now, raise your hand if you are going to go to Africa.* All the hands come down. *Why are your hands down?* I ask. They said they couldn't guarantee they were going to go to Africa. I tell them about my own teacher, Ms. Saunders, who used to show us pictures of her travels every September and always encouraged us to dream big. I tell them, if you want something bad enough you can seek the opportunity to make that happen."

Cory says not everyone responds the same way to his message. "Some I can see are overwhelmed by the number of "asks" they get for their support. Others get it right away. Some tell me afterwards that they had never thought about sharing their generosity with overseas credit unions before.

"When I got back from Uganda I learned how, unsolicited by me, my Port aux Basques branch had applied to host a credit union manager through CCA's Women's Mentorship Program. They saw value in what I was doing and wanted to play a role. They're busy getting ready to welcome a credit union manager from Uganda who arrives here next month to mentor at our credit union."

A veteran storyteller, Cory has learned not to expect everyone to share his enthusiasm. "It's understandable. They weren't there," he explains. "I try to make my message resonate with them in whatever way I can. Sometimes I simply ask people to look at their own history. Newfoundlanders are a generous people. They remember how their own credit unions and co-ops helped them pull through hard times." 📦



Cory Munden (third from left) visits Saul Mpagi's farm in Uganda during the 2012 CCA credit union coaching mission to that country. Mr. Mpagi (centre, pictured with his wife) said he was able to expand his farm thanks to loans from the local SACCO (Savings and Credit Co-operative). Also in the photo is CCA coach Harvey Wedgewood (fourth from right).