

Steelworkers Humanity Fund MEMBERS' REPORT 2014



April 2015

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund works nationally and internationally to promote equality, build stronger voices for communities and workers and protect the environment. This report is a summary of the Fund's activities in 2014.

Building Women's Equality

Almost 1000 women participated in women's rights and leadership training workshops offered by the Bolivian Centre for the Promotion of Mining. Participants came from all over Bolivia and left the workshops committed to applying their skills in their own communities.

The Nicaragua Miners' Federation built self-esteem in mining communities for almost **250 victims of gender-based violence** and offered access to psychological support and information about their rights and strategies to confront workplace and domestic violence.



Sustainable Development and Environment

ASDENA is training **20 Guatemalan farmers** in new agricultural techniques to increase food security in a changing climate. Each of these farmers will teach others how to apply their new knowledge on their own farms, thereby improving the diets of **150 families in 10 communities**. Surplus produce and livestock will be sold at market, helping to sustain a local economy.

Strengthening Workers' Organizations

Over **100 health and safety instructors were trained** by the Peruvian Mining Federation in order to promote safe working conditions in Peruvian mines.

The Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity will reach over **3000 textile workers, informing them of their rights to a safe workplace and decent working conditions**. The Centre is working hard to ensure that the country never again witnesses a disaster like the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse that killed more than 1,100 workers, mostly young women and girls, and left another 2,500 injured.



Steelworkers Humanity Fund
Suite 800, 234 Eglinton Avenue East
Toronto, ON M4P 1K7
Phone: (416) 487-1571

Email: humanityfund@usw.ca
www.usw.ca/union/humanity
Registered charity
11917 2278 RR0001



More Need than Ever for Humanitarian Assistance in 2014: Over \$100,000 contributed in Canada and Around the World

Regular contributions to the Humanity Fund by thousands of Steelworker members allows the Fund to respond quickly to natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies.



simon Rawles/Oxfam

Girl collects water at Oxfam distribution centre.

SOUTH SUDAN

Since conflict broke out in South Sudan in December 2013, thousands of people have been killed, and more than 2 million have been displaced. The SHF contributed \$23,000 to Oxfam's emergency response, helping the aid organization provide 300,000 people with safe water, improved sanitation, hygiene education and improved access to food.



MSF

MSF/Doctors Without Borders fiercely promoted a stronger international response to the crisis.

EBOLA IN LIBERIA, GUINEA, SIERRA LEONE

The spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa infected over 20,000 people and caused the death of over 10,000. The SHF contributed \$10,000 to Doctors Without Borders / MSF, that operated eight Ebola case management centres. The SHF also provided \$20,000 to Liberian unions to undertake the critical task of educating over 78,000 workers on how to prevent the virus' spread.



Canadian Red Cross

Emergency supplies handed out at a Red Cross Centre.

CANADA

Torrential rains in June led to severe flooding in parts of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The SHF responded with two \$10,000 contributions to the Canadian Red Cross in order to support the affected families and communities.



Iyad al Babal/Oxfam

A young girl collects water for her family (July 2014).

GAZA

The seven week Israeli offensive in the Gaza strip, and the international community's failure to stop the bombardments, created a humanitarian crisis. The United Nations (OCHA) reported over 2,000 people killed and 500,000 displaced. Gaza's infrastructure was destroyed and water system contaminated. The SHF contributed \$15,000 toward Oxfam's efforts to deliver clean drinking water.

Seeing is believing

In 2014 Steelworker members traveled to Colombia, Chile, Peru and El Salvador as part of the Workers Exchange program. During these trips, members had the opportunity to learn from the Humanity Fund's partners and see first-hand how their donations help communities respond to unjust economic systems that exploit workers, increase the suffering of the poor and destroy the environment.



An injury to one is an injury to all

As a woman, a heavy machine operator and a mine worker in Canada, Keri Shirvell (Local 1595) knows a thing or two about workplace safety. Along with Dave Williams (Local 9042), Keri travelled to Barranquilla, Colombia to share her experience as a health and safety activist with Colombian workers participating in VidaViva, a health and safety program supported by the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

The Canadians were surprised to learn that Colombian union activists have been fired, threatened, forced into exile or even murdered for doing the very things Steelworkers do every day in Canada. Hearing these stories granted Dave and Keri great perspective on the Humanity Fund's mandate to uphold human rights and support workers and communities fighting to improve their lives.

Steelworkers Tackle Violence against Women in Canada and Abroad

In 2011 and 2012 there were more than 2,000 reported murders of women and girls in Central America. Thousands more were victims of war crimes, exploitation and physical and sexual abuse. That is why the Steelworkers Humanity Fund supports a number of organizations such as CEPROMIN (Bolivia) and FESIMINI (Nicaragua) that directly address violence against women.

During a conference on Violence against Women held in El Salvador, three Canadian Women of Steel, Kim Bryson (Local 7975), Lisa Dale (Local 2724) and Laura Ramirez (SHF Staff) heard moving stories from Central American women. Among them was the personal account of a Colombian victim of an acid attack at the hands of her own partner and testimony to the pervasiveness of institutionalized incest.

The Canadian delegates understood the pain their Central American sisters experienced. Despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, Canada has alarming rates of violence against women, particularly among First Nations.

The Steelworkers are actively engaged in public advocacy and political action to eliminate inequality and violence against women in Canada as well as abroad. Through solidarity and progressive action we know we can make a difference.



A brigade of USW members working in Concepción, Chile building the Education Centre of the Chilean Forestry Workers Confederation.

Your Contributions at Work Around the World



Building Women's Equality

- CEPROMIN, Bolivian Centre for the Promotion of Mining, Bolivia
- IFFI, Institute for Holistic Training for Women, Bolivia
- FESIMINI, Nicaragua Miners' Federation, Nicaragua
- ProDesc, Project for Economic, Social and Environment Rights, Mexico

Sustainable Development and Environment

- ASDENA, Development Association Nuevo Amanecer, Guatemala
- DESMI, Social and Economic Development for Indigenous Mexicans, Mexico
- CEPROMIN, Bolivian Centre for Promotion of Mining, Bolivia

Strengthening Workers' Organizations to uphold rights

- Boabab Labour and Community Centre, Mozambique
- International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG), South Africa
- Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity, Bangladesh
- CONSTRAMET, Chilean Metal Workers, Chile
- CTF, Chilean Forestry Workers Confederation, Chile
- Vida Viva Colombia Platform, Colombia
- FESTRAS, Federation of Food, Agricultural and Related Workers, Guatemala
- FNTMMSP, Peruvian Mining Federation, Peru
- FAT, Authentic Workers Front, Mexico
- ProDesc, Project for Economic, Social and Environment Rights, Mexico
- CEPROMIN, Bolivian Centre for the Promotion of Mining, Bolivia



2014 Emergency Relief

- Guatemala —Tropical Storm Boris (\$10,000)
- Bangladesh — Compensation for victims and families of the Rana Plaza tragedy (\$20,000)
- West Africa — Ebola Outbreak (\$10,000)
- Liberia — Ebola Outbreak (\$20,000)
- South Sudan — Providing emergency water, sanitation and hygiene to South Sudan refugees (\$23,000)
- Gaza — Humanitarian work (\$15,000)
- Canada — Flood Recovery in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (\$21,500)

Fighting poverty in Canada (housing, food, education)

- | | |
|---|--|
| ● 73 Food Banks | ● Habitat For Humanity |
| ● Allô Prof | ● Houselink |
| ● Aspen Foundation for Labour Education | ● Fondation les amis de la Dauphinelle |
| ● Canada Without Poverty | ● Maison Victor-Gadbois |
| ● Centre d'action Bénévole du Granit | ● Rue des Femmes |

In addition to major projects, the SHF occasionally makes small one-time contributions to fulfil its mandate to alleviate poverty and uphold human rights. In 2014 the SHF contributed to “AIDS Free World Uganda” a group of LGBT activists fighting to uphold their rights in a hostile environment, “Enfants de Bolivie” a rural orphanage and “Power to Be” to build playgrounds for children in Jamaica.

The Steelworkers Humanity Support Fund, a not-for-profit sister organization, also contributed \$5,000 to the International Transport Workers Federation to assist Gazan trade unionists affected by the summer’s bombardments and \$3,000 in support of the South African Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union’s continued struggle to uphold the rights of South African farm workers.

Poverty is the problem, not hunger

In 2014 the Steelworkers Humanity Fund donated \$154,000 to 71 food banks across the country. Ken Neumann, President of the Humanity Fund and National Director for Canada of the USW, succinctly expressed their importance. "If food banks were not providing essential support to poor and vulnerable Canadians, poverty and its impact would be a lot more visible. The fact is that 841,000 Canadians must rely on food banks each month to put food on their tables and 3.8 million Canadians live in poverty."

Indeed, thousands of food banks across the country have stepped in where governments have shunned their responsibilities. Food bank volunteers have thus joined many other groups advocating for a government that cares for the most vulnerable, including affordable housing activists, parents concerned with the state of public education, doctors and nurses defending Medicare, and workers, unionized or not, fighting for a \$15-minimum wage.

Food banks used to be considered a temporary solution but today almost all communities not only have one, but need one. In fact, according to Food Banks Canada, the number of people accessing food banks in 2014 increased by 1% and remains 25% higher than it was in 2008.

Many large corporations are both culprits and beneficiaries of this terrible situation. We often see corporate sponsored charitable campaigns generate positive



Steelworker members from Local 2020 present a Humanity Fund cheque to the Harvest Share Community Food Bank in Parry Sound, ON.

publicity for the company. Loblaw's has "Extra helping," Campbell's Soup has "Nourish," McCain has "Food First." However, none of these campaigns address the primary causes of food insecurity: Workers aren't making enough to live decently and nutritious food is often unaffordable. Last year, some American Walmarts even asked their employees to contribute to a food bank to help out their own underpaid colleagues. Sadly, working in a grocery store, where shelf stockers make on average \$11 an hour, is a prime example of how precarious work creates the need for food banks. Workers like these retail employees are the new working poor.

Some food banks are thinking beyond the traditional model and are creating "Community Food Centres" where people can grow, cook, share and advocate for good food. In these centres people not only drop by to pick up food but are also encouraged to participate in cooking or gardening classes, invited to cook collectively and share a meal, and learn concretely how to advocate for all sorts of issues affecting the community. This novel approach is a much-needed initiative to help resolve a problem that has sadly become commonplace.



Financial Highlights Steelworkers Humanity Fund

	2012 audited	2013 audited	2014 preliminary
INCOME			
Negotiated CBA contributions	1,372,458	1,345,821	1,546,834
Other donations	114,288	96,300	67,955
Government funding	222,956		111,459
Investment income	33,829	19,713	72,000
Total revenue	1,743,531	1,462,324	1,698,248
PROGRAM SPENDING			
Food banks	135,299	127,300	153,500
Administration	131,071	146,198	186,212
Project support & development	291,298	412,139	309,803
Humanitarian Relief	87,000	183,500	107,407
Projects	807,554	628,132	764,291
Total expenses	1,452,222	1,497,269	1,521,214
Change (Revenue Less Expenses)	291,309	-34,945	177,034

Note: The Steelworkers Humanity Support Fund (a sister organization, which is not a charity) had revenues of \$77,000 and expenses of \$91,000 in 2014, which were mainly related to the Global Forestry Program, and are not included in the summary table above.

Harper Government Targets Left-Leaning Charities, including Steelworkers Humanity Fund

Over the last two years 60 Canadian charities have been targets of 'political activities audits' by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The first wave of audits targeted environmental charities (including Environmental Defence, USW's partner in Blue Green Canada), most of which oppose the Tory Government's energy policies and inaction on climate change. Well-known organizations such as Amnesty International, PEN, and Montreal based Alternatives, Canada Without Poverty, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (also a close ally of the USW) are all currently under audit. Most of the charities selected by the CRA for an audit have been critical of the policies of the Harper Government.

The Harper Government allocated \$13 million to the CRA for the charities' audits when it could have instead focused tax auditors on collecting billions of lost tax revenue illegally hidden by wealthy Canadians and corporations in off-shore accounts. Auditing charities will not generate any

additional revenues, but it might, as is widely believed, intimidate, silence, and destabilize critics of the Harper Government.

Most CRA audits are taking a long time. From the few results that are known, the CRA's interpretations of the charity rules are disconcerting. Negative audit results can force charities to change what they do or even lead to the loss of charitable status.

Given the Harper Government's withdrawal of funding from many progressive organizations including the SHF and its attack on workers' rights, it was hardly a surprise that the Steelworkers Humanity Fund was subject to a CRA audit in 2014. The audit examined the Fund's 'political activities' as well as all other aspects of its administration. We believe that the SHF operates within the rules and within its charitable mandate.

To date, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund has not received the results of the CRA audit.

Building Union Power through Health and Safety Training in Peru

When employers resist creating safe workplaces, unions have to take things into their own hands. In Peru, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund supports a major Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Project with the National Federation of Mine and Metal Workers of Peru (FNTMMSP). With funding from the Conference Board of Canada, the project aims to train over 100 union representatives in OHS Legislation, Systems Management, Leadership and Communication. The project also seeks to educate women miners and empower them to demand that women OHS rights be respected and their working conditions improved.

Besides financial support, the SHF is providing valuable human resources. In April 2014 Canadian USW trainers and activists Gerry Leblanc and Joe Da Costa facilitated an OHS Facilitators' Training Workshop. In October 2014 the Steelworkers hosted a group of Peruvian union leaders at a workshop in Kamloops, B.C. organized by USW Local 7619. The group then attended the National Health and Safety Conference in Toronto.



Gerry Leblanc, USW Health and Safety Department Head with Peruvian Health and Safety activists.

Tanzanian Villages Win Compensation from African Barrick Gold

At the North Mara Gold mine in Tanzania, owned by a subsidiary of Canadian based Barrick Gold, desperately poor villagers scavenge the mine's waste rock dumps, hoping to find rocks containing enough gold to eke out a minimal living. An unknown number of them have died, certainly dozens, and many more have been seriously wounded by mine security. The loss of lives and livelihoods has left many families living in exceptionally poor conditions.

In 2013 a group of Tanzanian victims sued Barrick Gold in Britain to hold the company liable for deaths and injury due to the excessive force used by mine security and police. In 2014 the Steelworkers Humanity Fund stepped in with a small humanitarian contribution to help provide urgently needed medical treatment for the victims and to find alternative income opportunities.

In February 2015 African Barrick Gold (under its new name – Acacia) and the villagers reached an out-of-court settlement.



[left] Samweli Mwita Nyangoya pumps a fist in celebration of the 2015 law-suit settlement. Samweli was left paralyzed from a bullet to the chest. Confined to a bed and without proper medical care, his condition was deteriorating before the assistance of the SHF.

[right] Thomas Lucas lost his leg in violence at the North Mara Mine in Tanzania.

