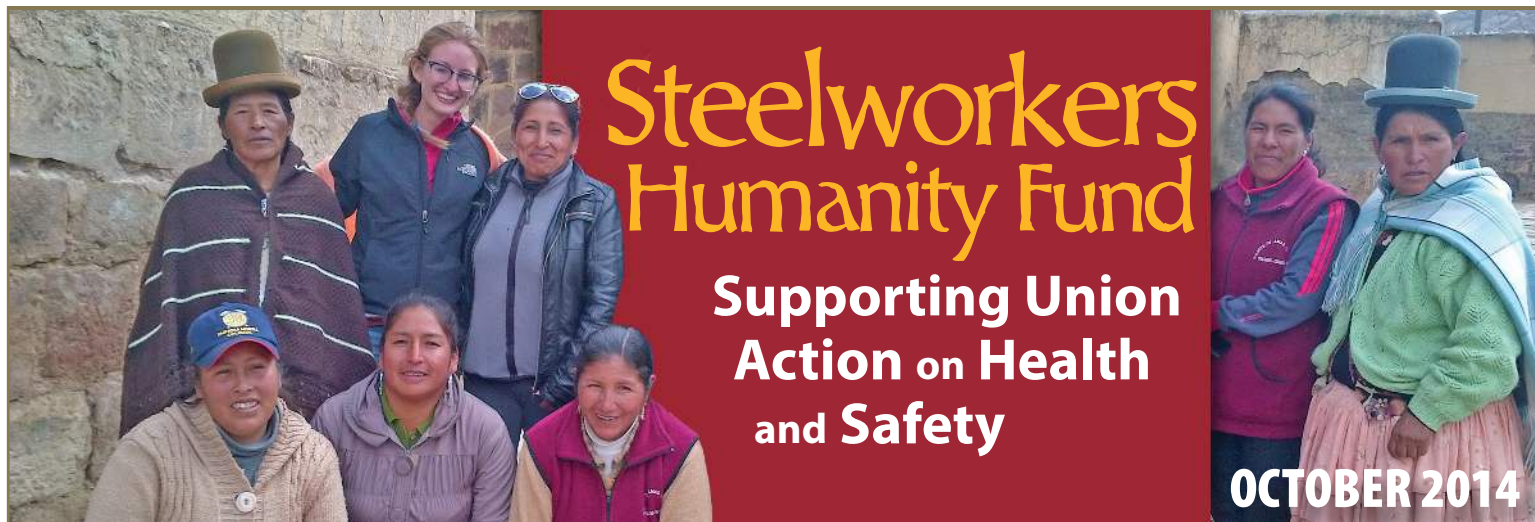




Building Union Health and Safety Power in Peru

Rapid growth in Peru's mining industry over the last 15 years has included an alarming increase in occupational accidents, diseases and fatalities.

Throughout this time the Steelworkers Humanity Fund has worked with the Peruvian Miners Federation (FNTMMSP) to rebuild an effective national union to address these urgent health and safety concerns.

The miners' federation is confronted by hostile employers that are increasingly hiring workers under temporary contracts with no job security and little health and safety protection, while the Peruvian government has been unable or unwilling to enforce labour and health and safety standards.

However, in 2011, a new, progressive Occupational Health and Safety Law was passed in Peru, featuring many provisions embedded in Canadian law, such as mandatory OHS Joint Committees



Facilitators Training for FNTMMSP Leaders

This training is key to help workers become equals with the employer in the area of health and safety

Joe da Costa, trainers' workshop facilitator.

in all workplaces and the promotion of a culture of prevention.

With the USW's help, the FNTMMSP is seizing on this opportunity to work for meaningful improvements of OHS standards.

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund recently received major funding

from the Conference Board of Canada to assist the FNTMMSP implement a new project titled *Building Effective Occupational Health and Safety Programs and Enforcement in the Mining Sector*.

The federation's objective is to build the knowledge and confidence of more than 100 union representatives

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Photo: Ken Neumann

The horrific conditions faced by garment workers in Bangladesh were exposed to the world following the April 2013 collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Savar that killed 1,138 and injured more than 2,000 others.

Paid only \$68 a month, working 12-hour shifts and sometimes forced to work 24 hours straight, these workers routinely face verbal and physical abuse from managers enforcing harsh deadlines. Sexual harassment and abuse are frequent.

Bangladesh is one the most dangerous places to work in the world. Over the past five years more than 2,000 workers have been killed in preventable fires and other building safety disasters. Six months before the Rana Plaza collapse, 112 workers died in a fire in their workplace because the emergency exits were blocked. Building standards in the country have been almost nonexistent and thousands of buildings are constructed without any regulations or safety protections.

The Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity (BCWS) is a respected labour rights advocacy organization in Bangladesh. For almost 15 years, it has fought for the advancement of workers' rights through education, investigating and documenting violations, and advocacy.

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund is supporting a project with BCWS aimed at strengthening workers' rights, improving working conditions and increasing the role of unions. Health and safety is a major focus. The project directly addresses the needs of women who represent the majority of workers in the sector.

The Humanity Fund, the USW, the Canadian Labour Congress and the Maquila Solidarity Network are members of a coalition of labour organizations advocating for labour rights in Bangladesh.

The coalition is advocating for the Canadian government and corporations that outsource work in Bangladesh to contribute to the Rana Plaza Trust Fund, set up to compensate victims of the 2013 disaster. To date the Trust Fund is \$20 million short of what is needed. A \$15,000 contribution made by the Steelworkers Humanity Fund in 2013 to help Rana Plaza victims has been directed to the trust fund. ■



USW National Director Ken Neumann was part of a 2014 international delegation that travelled to Bangladesh to demonstrate solidarity with garment workers and mark the anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy. Neumann called on Canadian and international clothing retailers to pay compensation to the victims' families. "We are here in Dhaka to remember the victims of the horrific tragedy, to fight for the injured and the families of those who were killed and to continue our work towards better and safer conditions for all workers in Bangladesh," he said.

Workers in the Rana Plaza manufactured clothes for Loblaws' Joe Fresh brand

Cheap Clothes Cost Lives in Bangladesh

In November 2013 Nick Lizun and Tracy Nguyen of USW Local 898 travelled to Bolivia and saw first-hand the challenges faced by miners and their families in the co-operative mining sector.

Bolivia's 115,000 co-operative miners account for roughly one-third of the country's mining output, 85% of mining employment, and produce more than 40% of mining exports.

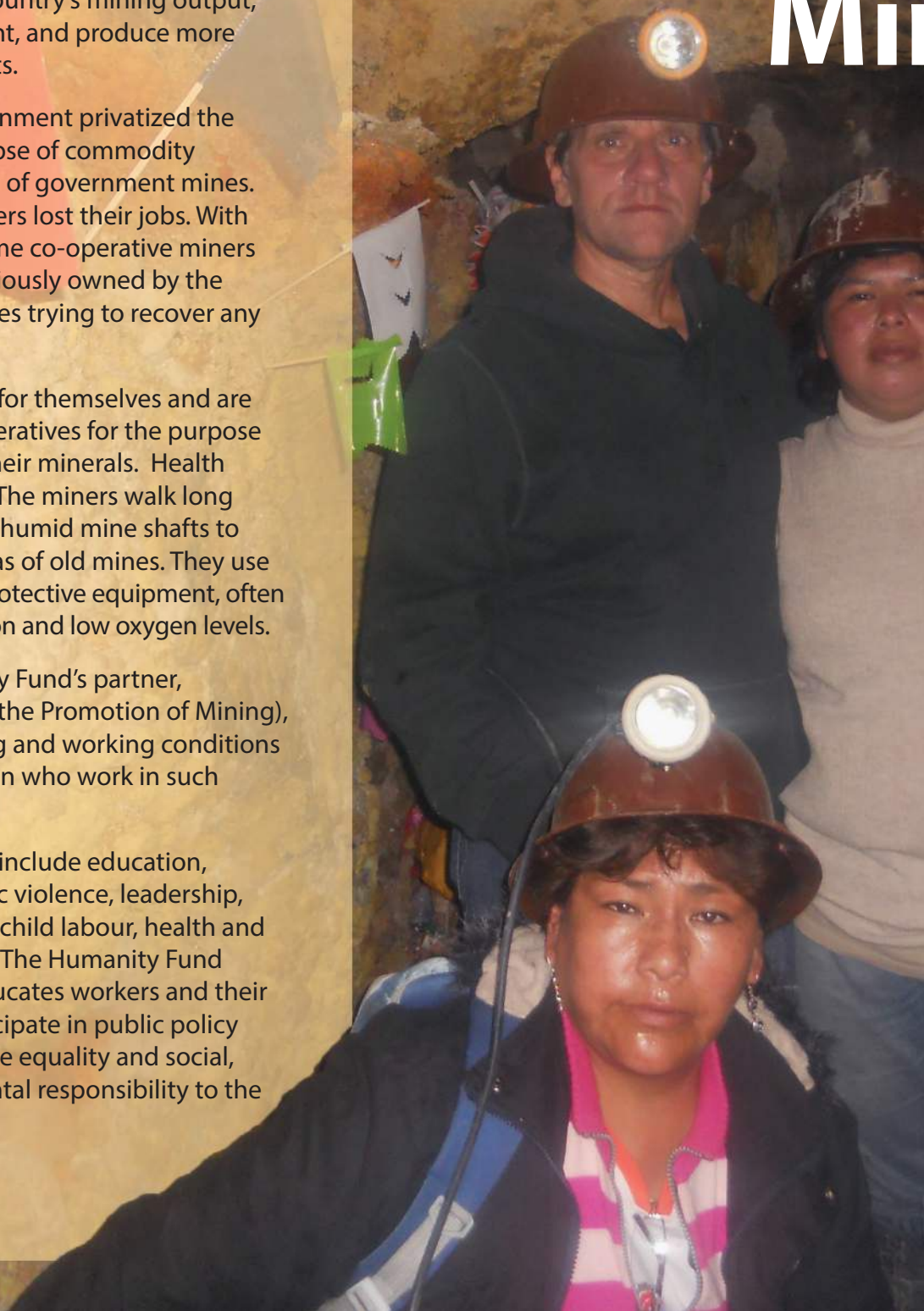
In 1985, the Bolivian government privatized the mining sector after a collapse of commodity prices led to the shutdown of government mines. Thousands of salaried miners lost their jobs. With no alternatives, they became co-operative miners working in mine sites previously owned by the state or in abandoned mines trying to recover any remaining minerals.

Co-operative miners work for themselves and are members of mining co-operatives for the purpose of marketing and selling their minerals. Health and safety is a huge issue. The miners walk long distances through narrow, humid mine shafts to work in dark, confined areas of old mines. They use primitive tools and basic protective equipment, often in areas with little ventilation and low oxygen levels.

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund's partner, CEPROMIN (the Centre for the Promotion of Mining), works to improve the living and working conditions of Bolivian women and men who work in such difficult circumstances.

CEPROMIN's areas of work include education, health and safety, domestic violence, leadership, empowerment of women, child labour, health and environmental protection. The Humanity Fund supports a project that educates workers and their leaders to help them participate in public policy development to bring more equality and social, economic and environmental responsibility to the mining industry. ■

Min



Supporting Co-operative Miners in Bolivia



Nick Lizun inside the Colquiri Cooperative Mine with women miners

Continued from page one.

across the country to participate and have an impact in Joint Health and Safety Committees.

It is a major challenge, but the federation realizes that trained and active union members are essential to the implementation and enforcement of health and safety laws and regulations. Faced with resistant employers, strong union advocacy is needed to force improvements in working conditions and reduce occupational risks and accidents. There are ongoing barriers, such as employers trying to undermine union efforts and denying leaves for health and safety activists.

Steelworkers are providing valuable expertise and resources to help the FNTMMSP implement its national OHS training plan.

In April a USW delegation (National Health, Safety and Environment Department Leader Gerry Leblanc, Health and Safety Trainer Joe da Costa and SHF Staff Laura Ramirez) travelled to Peru to participate in the FNTMMSP's third train-the-trainers workshop.

In September, a delegation of four Peruvian leaders came to Kamloops, B.C., (hosted by USW Local 7619) to participate in a health and safety workshop designed to provide a broader understanding of best practices, particularly in the context of joint health and safety committees and stronger instructor skills.

"It was exciting to watch the participants plan and design the course layout with so much confidence and enthusiasm. This training is key to help workers become equals with the employer in the area of health and safety," said Joe da Costa, trainers' workshop facilitator. ■

Vida Viva:

Health and Safety Innovation in Colombia



How can a union promote health and safety activism that mobilizes members, overcomes employer control and leads to real changes in the workplace to protect workers?

Unions around the world are confronted by such questions, but the challenge is even greater in countries such as Colombia, where labour activists continue to be killed by paramilitary organizations and unions face ongoing attacks from employers and government.

An innovative Steelworkers Humanity Fund health and safety training project is helping Colombian labour activists take up this daunting challenge.

A central part of the Vida Viva approach is body and workplace mapping, as a technique for workers to develop their own understanding of what is happening to them, their co-workers and families.

With the Brazilian CNM-CUT (metalworkers' union), TIE-Vida Viva and ISCOS (Italy), the SHF is working with a small group of selected activists and trainers from mining and metalworkers' unions to develop the capacity for grassroots, participatory action.

A central part of the Vida Viva approach is body and workplace mapping, as a technique for workers to develop their own understanding of what is happening to them, their co-workers

and families. What is making people sick? What are hazards?

The Vida Viva approach uses short and provocative videos (so called "Raio" in Portuguese) that are accompanied by support material for the trainer and a guideline/ orientation to lead dynamic participatory discussions. The Raio stimulates reflection and discussion about the relationship of workers' health, work and life and encourages workers to develop concrete action and strategies in their workplaces.

SHF is working to develop the capacity for grassroots, participatory action.

The critical issue is to develop a training approach that inspires participants in union courses to apply easy-to-use tools in their workplaces. Training that stays in the classroom is not of much use to anyone. The underlying theme is that building safer workplaces and healthier jobs will require ongoing collective action by union members, not only the work of a few union health and safety experts. ■



The SHF also supports the development of Vida Viva health and safety training in Mozambique.

Fighting Ebola in Liberia

The outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus has created a life and death threat to the health of millions in West Africa, including thousands of union members in Liberia.

One of every two people who contract Ebola dies. As of early September there were over 1,000 Ebola deaths in Liberia, with warnings that the worst is yet to come.

To help Liberian trade unions protect their members and their communities, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund has provided \$15,000 to support a health campaign promoting precautionary Ebola measures for workers and their families. The Humanity Fund also donated \$10,000 to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)/Doctors Without Borders. ■



Photo: Caroline Van Nieuwen/MSF

Ebola Management Centre in Monrovia, Liberia. August 2014.



Photo: P.K. Lee/MSF

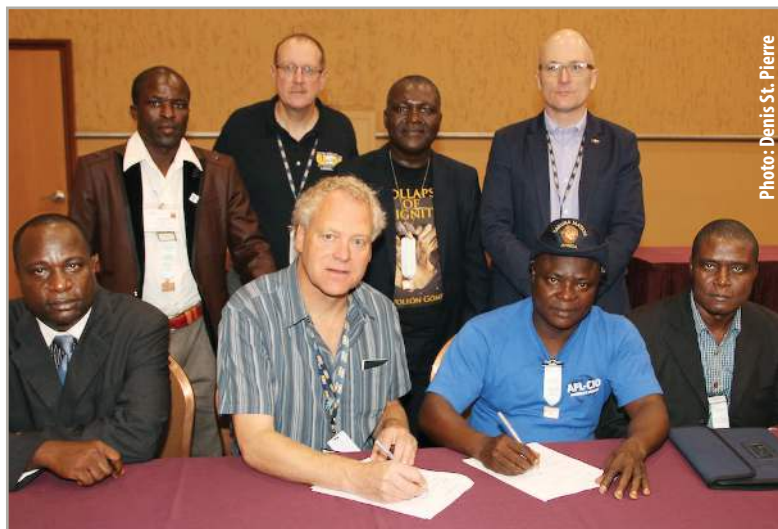


Photo: Denis St. Pierre

Above: Las Vegas, August 2014. Steelworkers and Liberian trade unionists sign commitments to fund Ebola prevention initiatives.

Left: Dr. Joanne Liu (International President of Médecins Sans Frontières) Ebola treatment centre in Kailahun, Sierra Leone August 2014.

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