

STEELWORKERS Humanity Fund



Members' Report 2019

May 2020

DRAWING STRENGTH *from our* COMMON STRUGGLES

This report showcases some of what we, together through the Steelworkers Humanity Fund (SHF), have been able to do in 2019 to support workers and communities around the world in our common struggle to build better lives and fight for rights.

2019 will probably be known as the year before COVID-19; these lines are being written at a moment when the health crisis is not yet past in Canada and the

lasting impacts on workers and the economy have yet to be seen. Already, economic disruptions caused by the virus have upended the lives of millions of workers in global supply chains and again dramatically exposed the injustice and inequality of a broken global economic system.

In this new reality, the SHF is more needed than ever as a tool for Steelworker solidarity with the most vulnerable people in our commu-

nities and around our deeply interconnected world to face the challenges ahead. ■



Workers in Mexico Win the Right to Organize

LEGITIMATE UNIONS



Members of the FAT attending a workshop.

Photo: Frente Auténtico de los Trabajadores



Rosalba Calvo (FAT) with Mario Boisvert (Local 6887) during a SHF visit to Mexico

Photo: Laura Ramirez

[The new federal labour law] is a unique opportunity to strengthen independent unionism and enforce principles that the labour movement has fought for for over 60 years.

— Rosalba Calvo

Up until April 2019, “protection contracts” have been major obstacles for Mexican workers to organize independent unions. They kept wages low and guaranteed employers “trouble-free” labour relations.

Protection contracts are collective agreements signed between employers and company-friendly unions without the participation of workers, sometimes without them even knowing about their affiliation, as these contracts are often signed before plants are open and workers hired. Whenever workers would try to organize a legitimate union, certification would be denied because a union was already registered in the workplace. Coupled with Mexico’s very low wages

and significant workforce in need of work, protection contracts made it very advantageous for many North American companies to move their operations south of the border.

A key condition for the signature of the new U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement (also known as CUSMA), was for Mexico to have truly effective labour legislation. This new labour law will allow millions of Mexican workers to bargain considerable improvements to their wages, working conditions and job security. It will guarantee workers the freedom to vote for their union representation through secret ballot, bargain and vote for their collective agreements.

But a labour reform is only as good as the workers’ capacity to ensure its implementation. For this reason, the Authentic Labour Front (FAT in Spanish), a long-standing labour partner of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, will carry out a series of forums and education workshops for workers across the country. During the next two years, Mexican workers will learn about the new labour model and resources available to transition into democratically organized unions.

This means knowing about the responsibilities of the new labour board, bargaining, organizing, arbitration mechanisms, secret-ballot elections of union leadership, union transparency and accountability. The workshops will increase workers’ capacity to make sure the new

labour legislation is respected by employers.

Rosalba Calvo, a member of the National Co-ordination Committee of the FAT, summarizes the new federal labour law as “a unique opportunity to strengthen independent unionism and enforce principles that the labour movement has fought for for over 60 years.”

Fortunately, the FAT is not alone in this massive endeavour, and will work with other independent labour organizations to educate as many workers as possible about this breakthrough legislation to make it reach its full potential – and change the face of labour in Mexico. ■

Community Food Centres Addressing Food Insecurity in Canada

Food insecurity in Canada is on the rise, reflecting increasing social inequalities. Each year, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund (SHF) supports food banks as they respond to the needs of thousands of individuals and families across the country.

But changing the structures that allow such inequalities to exist can only happen through organized political action. This is what the SHF partner Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC) strives to do through initiatives such as

When I started helping people on the ground, the idea of empowering them motivated me.

– Nicola Moore

the Community Action Program that empowers people like Nicola Moore to effect change.

Nicola had never voted in a federal election. In the 2019 election, not only did she vote, she took the lead on mobilizing members of her community. Joining the Hamilton Community Food Centre's Community Action Program inspired her.

"When I started helping people on the ground, the idea of empowering them motivated me," Nicola



says. She got training to become a peer advocate in this 12-week advocacy program. As an advocate, she now supports people who are struggling with poverty and food insecurity to access supports and services.

In the lead-up to the election, she led the charge on voter engagement in the community, taking part in two pan-Canadian campaigns to give people the space to talk to candidates about the issues that matter to them.

"You need to find out what's most important to you, what you stand for and align yourself with a candidate who shares those same values," Nicola says. "Then you can connect with like-minded people to make the change happen."

In 2019, many organizations across the country have developed into Community Food Centres, growing an expanding network of organizations committed to implementing activities and programs aimed at building health, belonging

and social justice in low-income communities.

Moreover, Community Food Centres Canada has recently started working with Indigenous partners, exploring how to adapt this model in their own contexts. The Steelworkers Humanity Fund is proud to support this innovative work into 2020, as a way to tackle the challenges of food insecurity specific to Eel Ground First Nation (New Brunswick) and Birch Narrows Dene Nation (Saskatchewan). ■

THE GLOBAL FIGHT for Corporate Accountability



Anghelica Choc (second from right) with other plaintiffs in Canada for their cross-examination.

Photo: Rights Action

Corporations must be held accountable for negligence and human and labour rights violations in Canada and around the world. In 2019, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund (SHF) has been supporting community activists in their struggles for corporate accountability in three emblematic cases across Latin America, in settings where impunity tends to be the norm and justice can feel out of reach.

Guatemala: In 2007, residents of the Lote Ocho community in Guatemala were violently evicted from their ancestral land by security guards from the nearby nickel mine, with support from the police and military forces. Eleven women claimed to have been gang-raped. Two years later, in the midst of protests against the same mine, security personnel raided the village again, killing community leader Adolfo Ich and leaving German Chub paralyzed from the waist down. Along with other victims, Anghelica Choc, the widow of Adolfo Ich, has been seeking justice for her husband and her community. Unable to hold the mine and its owners accountable in Guatemala's legal system, they took legal action in Canada against the owners of the mine – Hudbay Minerals. Together with Rights Action, the SHF is supporting this precedent-setting case, as it paves the way in defining the responsibility Canadian headquarters bear for the actions of subsidiaries.

Colombia: The construction of the Hidroituango hydroelectric dam in Colombia in 2012 required the flooding of 4,550 hectares of land and the violent eviction of entire villages by paramilitary forces. Due to poor construction, the dam still has not produced any electricity. Movimiento Ríos Vivos Antioquia

represents many of the opposing communities who continue to defend their rights and the environment in spite of persecution and threats. SHF and other labour and international solidarity organizations in Canada supported a Canadian speaking tour of Isabel Zuleta, one of the movement's spokespeople, to raise awareness about the massive public investments received by the dam's builder from public entities such as Export and Development Canada and the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec.

Brazil: On Jan. 25, 2019, the collapse of the tailings dam of mining giant Vale's Córrego do Feijão iron ore mine became one of the worst industrial accidents in the country's history, killing 289 people. Following this disaster – the second tailings dam breach to take place at an installation owned by Vale in under five years – local civil society was quick to spring into action. The SHF provided emergency assistance the Associação Comunitária da Jangada, headed by Carolina de Moura Campos, in order to support families in six communities affected by the tragedy. In the months following the disaster, each community implemented initiatives in response to local needs, ranging from infrastructure repair to activities seeking to strengthen the community's social fabric.

Although abuses tend to be more blatant in contexts where the judicial system is weaker, corporate accountability cannot be taken for granted in a world in which money knows no borders. For this reason, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund will continue to support human rights defenders such as Anghelica, Isabel and Carolina, who are on the front lines of the battle against impunity for corporate crimes. ■



Isabel Zuleta (second on the right) learned about the dismantling process of two dams on the Elwha River (Washington State), near Vancouver.

Photo: Comit e pour les droits humains en Am rique latine



Carolina DeMoura Campos (second on the right) accompanying the committee at Parque da Cachoeira.

Photo: Associa o Comunit ria da Jangada



Carolina DeMoura Campos (left) with the group at Acampamento P tria Livre, who decided to invest the funds in the local school.

Photo: Associa o Comunit ria da Jangada

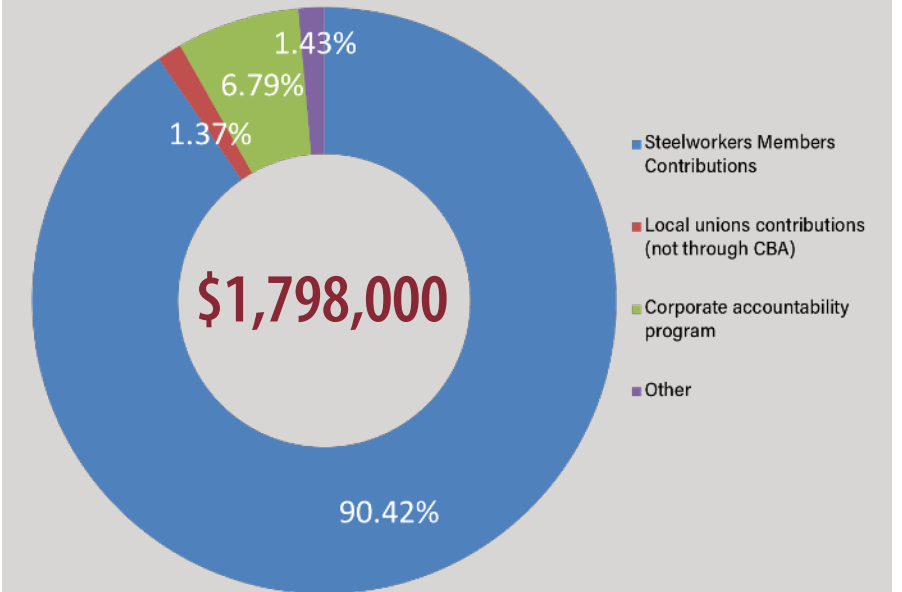


Isabel Zuleta (left) at a public event in Montr al.

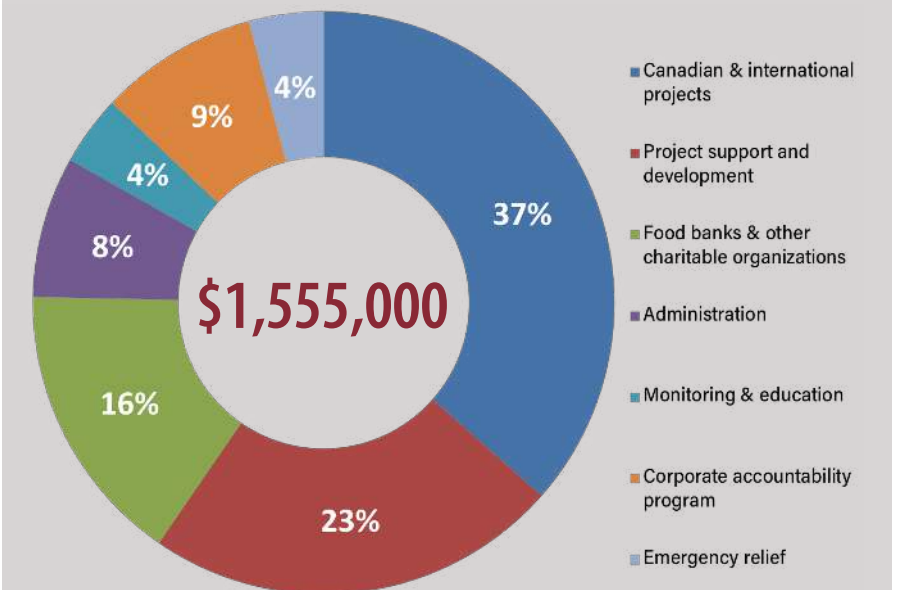
Photo: Comit e pour les droits humains en Am rique latine

2019 Our finances

Where our money comes from



Where our money goes



Note: Due to the restriction on movements of individuals linked to the COVID19 pandemic, financial statements for 2019 could not be audited in time for the production of this report.



Emergency Relief | Secours d'urgence

- Vale tailings dam collapse, Brazil – 13,000\$
Effondrement d'un barrage de rétention de résidus miniers propriété de Vale, Brésil – 13 000\$
- Ottawa River Valley flooding, Ontario – \$10,000
Inondations dans la Vallée de la Rivière des Outaouais, Ontario – 10 000\$
- Forest fires in Northern Alberta – 10,000\$
Feux de forêt dans le nord de l'Alberta – 10 000\$
- Cyclone Idai, Mozambique – \$12,000
Cyclone Idai, Mozambique – 12 000\$
- Hurricane Dorian, Bahamas – \$5,000
Ouragan Dorian, Bahamas – 5 000\$
- Refugee resettlement in Canada – \$7,500
Appui à l'installation de réfugiés au Canada – 7 500\$
- Dhaka shanty town fire, Bangladesh – \$7,000
Feu dans un bidonville de Dhaka, au Bangladesh – 7 000\$

Your contributions at work around the world Vos contributions au travail dans le monde

Legend | Légende

- Building Women's Equality
Renforcer l'égalité des femmes
- Upholding Labour Rights
Faire respecter les droits des travailleuses et travailleurs
- Emergency Relief
Secours d'urgence
- Sustainable Development and Environment
Développement durable et environnement
- Promoting Human Rights
Promouvoir les droits de la personne
- Fighting Poverty in Canada
Lutte contre la pauvreté au Canada

Our Partners | Nos partenaires

- AAAJC - Bench Marks Foundation, Mozambique /
Fondation Bench Marks, Mozambique
- ASDENA - *Nuevo Amanecer* Health and Development Association,
Guatemala / Association pour la santé et le développement *Nuevo Amanecer*, Guatemala
- Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity /
Centre de solidarité ouvrière du Bangladesh
- Camp for Peace, Liberia / Camp pour la paix, Libéria
- CNCA - Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability /
RCRCE - Réseau canadien sur la reddition de compte des entreprises
- Common Frontiers, Canada
- Community Food Centres Canada /
Centres communautaires d'alimentation du Canada
- Corporación Trabajadores por la Tierra, Colombia /
Corporación Trabajadores por la Tierra, Colombie
- DESMI - Social and Economic Development for Indigenous Mexicans,
Chiapas / Développement économique et social des Autochtones
mexicains, Chiapas
- FAT - Authentic Workers Front, Mexico /
Front authentique des travailleurs, Mexique
- FESIMINI - Nicaragua Miners' Federation / Fédération des syndicats
des travailleurs et travailleuses des mines et connexes du Nicaragua
- FNTMMSP - National Federation of Workers, Miners and
Steelworkers of Peru / Fédération syndicale des travailleurs et
travailleuses, métallurgistes et mineurs péruviens
- FOCA - *Formación y Capacitación A.C.*, Mexico /
FOCA - Formación y Capacitación A.C., Mexique
- Horizons of Friendship, Canada / Horizons d'amitié, Canada
- Housing Assembly, Cape Town, South Africa /
Assemblée du logement, Le Cap, Afrique du Sud
- ILRIG - International Labour Research and Information Group, South Africa /
Groupe international de recherche et d'information sur le travail, Afrique du Sud
- Jeunes musiciens du monde, Canada
- KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, Canada
- Maharashtra Building, Construction, Forest and Wood Workers
Union, India / Syndicat des travailleurs du bâtiment, de la construction,
de la foresterie et du bois du Maharashtra, Inde
- OKKS - *Orissa Kendupatra Karmachari Sangha*, India /
Orissa Kendupatra Karmachari Sangha, Inde
- Maquila Solidarity Network, Canada
- ProDesc - Project for Economic, Social and Environment Rights, Mexico /
Projet pour les droits économiques, sociaux et environnementaux, Mexique
- Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie, Canada
- *Sendika Kritianina Malagasy (SEKRIMA)*, Madagascar
- Unionism and Life of Societies (SVS), Madagascar /
Syndicalisme et Vie des Sociétés (SVS), Madagascar
- Vida Viva Colombia Platform / Viva Vida plateforme Colombie
- *Visitación Padilla*, Honduras

Member of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation
Membre du Conseil canadien pour la coopération internationale



Abel Learwellie (Camp for Peace, Liberia)
speaking at the United Steelworkers National Policy Conference 2019



Photo: Guillaume Charboneau

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