

In Guatemala, Steelworkers Humanity Fund partner ASDENA has provided emergency support to peasant families of Chimaltenango during the isolation period due to COVID-19.



Photo credit:  
ASDNA

# Members' Report 2020

STEELWORKERS HUMANITY FUND

## Strengthening Partnerships in a Time of Adversity

For many of us, there will be a before and an after 2020. When the acronym "COVID-19" first entered our vocabulary, few could foresee the massive changes ahead. It is with the victims of the pandemic in mind that this annual report looks back at how the Steelworkers Humanity Fund (SHF) and our partners adapted their programs and interventions to deal with the crisis.

From Canada to Colombia, South Africa to India, SHF partners found ingenious ways to reach out to their respective communities, members or beneficiaries. Your contribution helped mitigate some of the worst impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on vulnerable populations, with sometimes no or barely any social safety nets to rely on. The virus' impact only further exposed the flaws of a broken system.

Let the commitment of the SHF partners here and around the world be an inspiration for the task ahead of rebuilding more just, fairer societies. ■



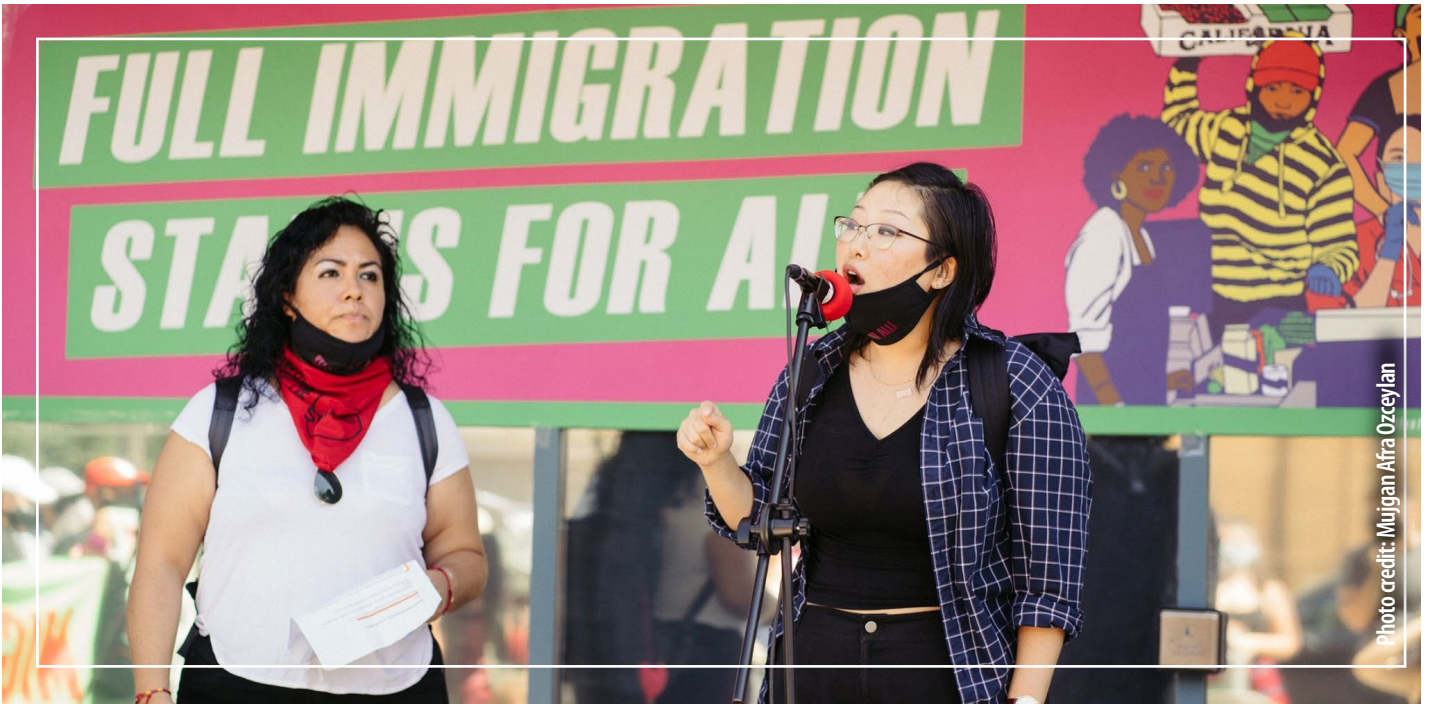


Photo credit: Mujgan Afra Ozceylan

Migrant Workers Action Network action in favour of a status for all.

## Canada

In order to respond rapidly to some of the emerging needs here and abroad, the SHF created a special COVID-19 relief program. In 2020, close to \$450,000 were distributed for support in 13 countries, including \$279,000 in Canada for organizations such as the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change and Canada Against Poverty.

In Canada, 1 in 23 people (over 1.6 million) are without permanent resident status. They are mostly low-waged and racialized workers living in Canada on a number of different immigration permits. In 2020, the SHF provided funds to the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change in order to support the Migrant Rights Network, an organization comprised of grassroots, mostly all-volunteer organizations. This support helped provide relief to people without an official immigration status across the country as well as the network's national advocacy work towards full and permanent immigration status for all.

In April 2020, the SHF supported the creation of the Poverty Pandemic Watch (PPW), an initiative of Canada Without Poverty to provide an overview and assessment of the housing, income, and food security policies, programs, and government spending that has been rolled out in response to COVID-19. As part of this project, the organization hosted national roundtables featuring diverse anti-poverty organizations, advocates, and people who had experienced poverty to gain firsthand knowledge of the situation in various communities across Canada. PPW was able to draw attention to the vulnerable communities falling through the gaps in social welfare and pandemic relief programs, and challenge the Canadian government to adapt its interventions accordingly. ■

# Latin America

VidaViva is a cutting-edge initiative in health and safety education and mobilization for unions. The SHF has for many years provided strategic support to several grassroots unions in Colombia to implement the VidaViva approach. Already living and working in the most dangerous country in the world to be a human rights activist, COVID-19 brought yet more challenges to the trade unionists members of the network.

The VivaVida methodology relies heavily on in-person meetings, made impossible by the pandemic. But rather than allowing themselves to be paralyzed, the group rose to the challenge and coordinated the production of a booklet situating the workers' daily health and safety issues in this new context. Made by a professional illustrator, this cartoon strip invited workers to rethink work-life balance, and urged them to join the VidaViva movement.

While enforcing strict physical distancing measures, 10,000 copies of the popular booklet were distributed directly to workers affiliated to the 15 Colombian unions members of the Vida Viva Colombia network. ■



Distributing the VivaVida booklet to Colombian workers.



Photo credit: SINTRACARCOL

## Africa

In South Africa, like in Canada, COVID-19 created serious challenges for trade unions, community and human rights organizations as lockdowns and social distancing threatened to cut off communication and engagement with grassroots activists.

Like many others, the International Labour Research and Education Group (ILRIG) turned to Zoom to carry on its education program but shortly after realized that webinars were not well suited for the poor and marginalized communities it works with because of the lack of funds to purchase data and the lack of higher quality smart phones. So ILRIG turned to an older yet proven technology, the radio, and worked with theater artists to produce two radio plays

The first play, *Plague in the Time of King Kapital and Queen Corona*, reflected the experience of working class and unemployed communities in South Africa under COVID-19 and was aired on 22 community radio stations. The second radio play, *No money for Jam*, was built around the struggles of workers at a jam factory during the pandemic and brought in issues of precarious work and gender-based violence. The 31 radio stations that aired *No Money for Jam* had an audience of over 1 million.

ILRIG is just one of the progressive organizations that partner with the Steelworkers Humanity Fund that have had to be creative to find new ways to communicate. ■

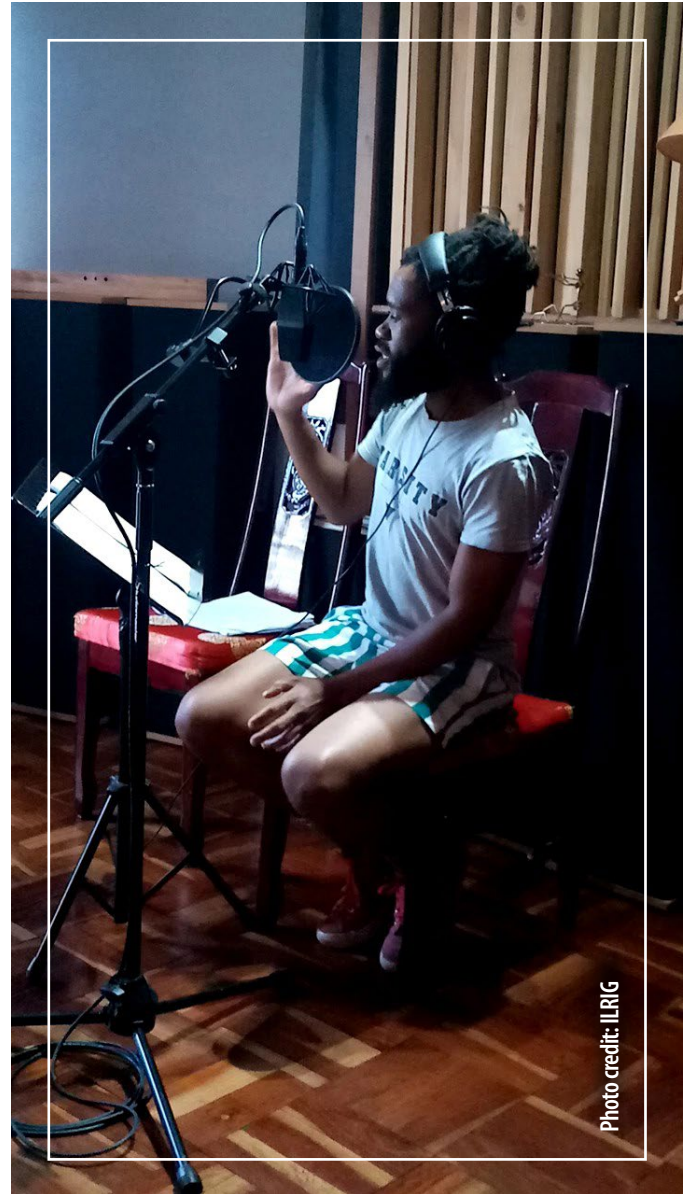


Photo credit: ILRIG

A South African actor in the process of recording the radio play.

## Asia

In India, SHF partner BWI (Building and Woodworkers International) has been accompanying unions in the state of Odisha to improve the standards of living of forestry workers and communities, and to enable them to defend their own rights. Their members are informal workers in low-skilled jobs like the collection of sal and kendu leaves, the main material used to produce daily use products like beedi cigarettes and disposable bowls and plates. Often living in very remote

communities, they represent some of the most disadvantaged populations of the country.

Organizing in this context is, at the best of times, very challenging. The pandemic forced BWI to shift its annual workplan and involve local union partners as key actors in the transmission of vital information to those rural populations. The unions coordinated the mass production of leaflets and posters to raise awareness

on COVID-19 in the local language Odia, Hindi and English which were distributed across the villages where workers live, along with hand sanitizers, masks, paper tissues and soap.

The local union leadership also played an important role in conveying their members' concerns to local authorities in order to generate much needed financial relief to workers of the forestry sector. ■



Sal leaf pluckers during a COVID-19 awareness program on their work site.

Photo credit: OKKS

# Emergency Relief

Aside from the pandemic, natural and man-made disasters did not take a break in 2020, affecting many communities around the world. The Steelworker Humanity Fund responded to various calls for support

In February 2020, the sudden eruption of the Taal Volcano in the Philippines required the immediate evacuation of thousands of families south of the capital Manila. Following the lead of Steelworkers members of Filipino heritage, the SHF contributed financially to the relief efforts through OXFAM Canada, allowing displaced families to have access to clean water, sanitation and healthcare supplies until they could safely return home.

In August 2020, massive explosions rocked the Port of Beirut, destroying and damaging large parts of the Lebanese capital. Linked to a large quantity of highly explosive material that had been stored in an abandoned ship without proper safety measures, the blast killed at least 200 people, left hundreds of thousands homeless, and caused billions of dollars in property damage. Funds provided by SHF through the Canadian Red Cross provided essential healthcare relief such as medications, equipment, supplies, as well as first response training in the most vulnerable areas.

Lastly, since November 2020, a conflict has been raging between Ethiopian government forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The humanitarian crisis that followed mainly affected civilians, especially women and children, including close to 100,000 Eritrean refugees who had previously fled their own country. In order to prevent the crisis from worsening, the SHF supported Oxfam Ethiopia as it coordinated the international response to provide much-needed assistance to the people of the region. ■



Part of downtown Beyrouth was destroyed by the explosion that rocked the Lebanese capital.

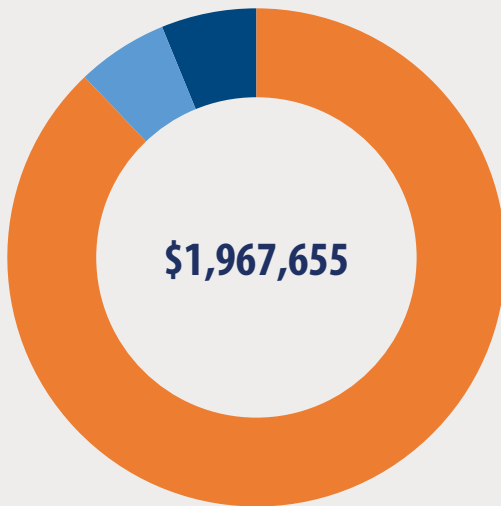
► p7. Oxfam Pilipinas, together with representatives from other humanitarian organizations and the Department of Health, conduct assessments in an evacuation centre for families displaced by the Taal Volcano eruption.



Photo credit: April Ann Bulanadi

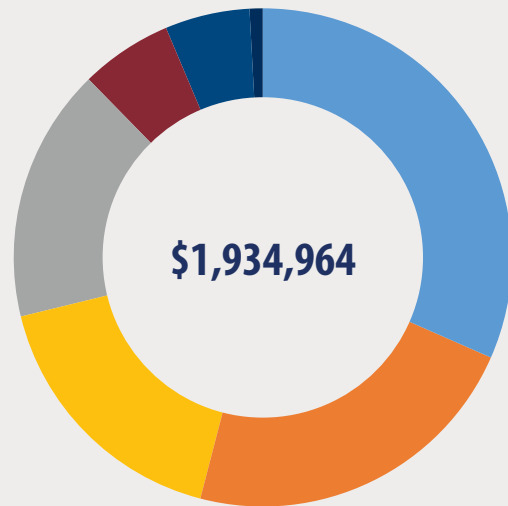
## Our finances 2020

### Where our money comes from



- Steelworkers Members Contributions
- Local unions contributions (not through CBA)
- Corporate accountability program

### Where our money goes



- Canadian and international projects
- Food banks and other charitable organizations
- Project support and development
- COVID-19 and Emergency relief
- Administration
- Corporate accountability program
- Monitoring & education



# Your contributions at work around the world in 2020

## Vos contributions au travail dans le monde in 2020

### Legend / Légende

- Building Women's Equality  
*Renforcer l'égalité des femmes*
- Sustainable Development and Environment  
*Développement durable et environnement*
- Upholding Labour Rights  
*Faire respecter les droits des travailleuses et travailleurs*
- Promoting Human Rights  
*Promouvoir les droits humains*
- Emergency Relief for Natural Disasters  
*Secours d'urgence pour les désastres naturels*
- Emergency Relief – COVID-19 related  
*Secours d'urgence liés à la COVID-19*
- 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

● *Asociación Quisca*, Peru / *Asociación Quisca*, Pérou

●● BCWS – Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity /  
Centre de solidarité ouvrière du Bangladesh

●● Canada Without Poverty, Canada /  
Canada sans pauvreté, Canada

● CAFNIMA – Centro de atención de la familia y al niño  
maltratado, Guatemala

●● Camp for Peace, Liberia / Camp pour la paix, Libéria

●●● CNCA – Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability /  
RCRCE - Réseau canadien pour la reddition de compte des  
entreprises

● CCDA – Comité campesino del Altiplano, Guatemala

●● Common Frontiers, Canada

●● Community Food Centres Canada /  
Centres communautaires d'alimentation du Canada

● CDHAL – Comité pour les droits humains en Amérique latine,  
Canada

●● *Comité fronterizo de obreras*, Mexico /  
*Comité fronterizo de obreras*, Mexique

● *Corporación Araza*, Colombia / *Corporación Araza*, Colombie

●●● *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

● EMIH – *Equipo de Monitoreo Independiente de Honduras*

●● FAT – Authentic Workers Front, Mexico /  
Front authentique des travailleurs, Mexique

● Horizons of Friendship, Canada / Horizons d'amitié, Canada

● Housing Assembly, Cape Town, South Africa /  
Assemblée du logement, Le Cap, Afrique du Sud

● *Huaynakana Kamatahuara*, Peru /  
*Huaynakana Kamatahuara*, Pérou

●● 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

●● 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

●● Maquila Solidarity Network, Canada

●● OKKS – *Orissa Kendupatra Karmachari Sangha*, India /  
*Orissa Kendupatra Karmachari Sangha*, Inde

● Place de la dignité, Chile / Place de la dignité, Chili

● Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie, Canada

● *Radio Ucamara*, Peru / *Radio Ucamara*, Pérou

● *Sendika Kritianina Malagasy* (SEKRIMA), Madagascar

● Syndicalisme et Vie des Sociétés (SVS), Madagascar

● Vida Viva Colombia Platform / Viva Vida plateforme Colombie

● Zimbabwe Labour Central, Zimbabwe /  
Central du travail du Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe

## Emergency relief for natural disasters / Secours d'urgence pour les désastres naturels

**\$ 7,000 / 7 000 \$**

Taal Volcano eruption, Philippines /  
Éruption du volcan Taal, Philippines

**\$ 5,000 / 5 000 \$**

Port of Beirut Explosion, Lebanon /  
Explosion dans le port de Beirut, Liban

**\$ 10,000 / 10 000 \$**

Assistance to civilian victims in the Tigray Region,  
Ethiopia / Assistance aux victimes civiles du conflit  
dans la région du Tigré, Éthiopie