



INTERNATIONAL  
*Solidarity*  
FUNDS

ANNUAL REPORT (2017 – MARCH 2018)





# OPSEU AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WORK

## HISTORY OF OPSEU'S INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WORK

OPSEU has long been involved in international solidarity work including financial support to civil society and non-governmental organizations. In the early 1980's OPSEU Convention passed a resolution to support the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) through an annual donation of \$5,000. This donation stopped when the late first President of South Africa, Mr. Nelson Mandela, walked to freedom in 1990 following the crash of the apartheid system. This was an historic act by OPSEU of solidarity. Shortly after 1990, Mandela became the first recipient of the OPSEU Stanley Knowles Humanitarian Award. To this day, OPSEU continues with this

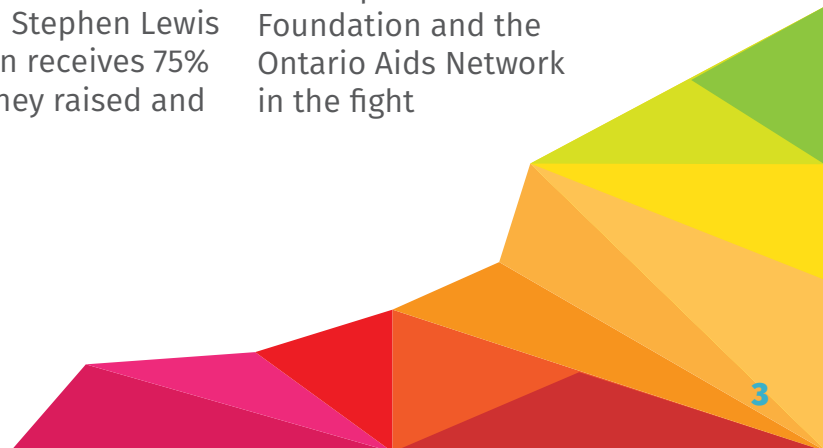
spirit of International Solidarity. This spirit was put into action at the 2003 OPSEU Convention when the Provincial Human Rights Committee (PHRC) passed a resolution that established two OPSEU International Solidarity Funds. These are: Live and Let Live Fund (LLLFF) and the Social Justice Fund (SJF).

## THE LIVE AND LET LIVE FUND (LLL) FUND

At that same Convention in 2003 OPSEU members resolved to set up a Fund which would raise money from OPSEU locals and members to contribute to the fight against HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa and Ontario. It was decided that funds raised would be split between two organizations on a 75% - 25% ratio. Stephen Lewis Foundation receives 75% of the money raised and

25% to the Ontario Aids Network. The remainder 5% is reserved for fund administration. The fund continues to receive donations directly from members of OPSEU or directly through the various OPSEU Locals.

In 2003, an Executive Board passed a motion to approve an annual standing donation of \$50,000 per year to the Stephen Lewis Foundation. This amount was subsequently adjusted to \$25,000 donation per year in 2013. The purpose of the standing donation is to combat HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. This standing donation is separate from the Live and Let Live Fund and the Social Justice Fund. This fund provides financial support to the Stephen Lewis Foundation and the Ontario Aids Network in the fight



against HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa and Ontario. OPSEU operates an annual silent auction event at every Convention to raise additional funds that further supports the activities of the Live and Let Live Fund.

### **THE SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND (SJF)**

The Social Justice Fund also stems from 2003 OPSEU Convention when members mandated OPSEU to set aside 48 cents per member per year to go into this Fund. The role of the Social Justice Fund is to provide financial support to small international development projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America/Caribbean regions.

In year 2015 and by way of another resolution, OPSEU members mandated that each member donate one dollar (\$1.00) per year towards international solidarity causes which is an increase from the previous

donation of 48 cents per member per year. The one dollar per OPSEU member annual contribution is currently the OPSEU member annual contribution amount.

Each year at convention, OPSEU operates a **SILENT AUCTION** event which raises additional funds towards international solidarity causes under the Social Justice and the Live and Let Live Funds.

### **BREAKING IT DOWN: HOW THESE FUNDS SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY CAUSES**

Both the SJF and LLL Funds are governed through By-Laws which provide direction on how the elected Board of Directors will conduct the operations of both funds. The Social Justice Fund Board and the Live and Let Live Fund Board have a Board comprising of the following elected positions.

1. The President of OPSEU.
2. OPSEU Executive Board Member responsible for HIV/AIDS work.
3. OPSEU Executive Board Member responsible for International humanity work.
4. OPSEU Executive Board Member responsible for international solidarity work.
5. Member of the OPSEU Provincial Human Rights Committee (PHRC).
6. Member of the OPSEU Provincial Women's Committee (PWC)
7. Member of OPSEU Young Workers Committee (PYC)

The Boards are provided with professional and administrative support by OPSEU Staff in the Equity Unit.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR FUNDING

As a Union that represents all workers; OPSEU identifies with working people globally. The Board of Directors meets to review and approve projects that meet these guiding principles and criteria:

OPSEU'S international solidarity funds strive to support:

- Organizations that recognize the need to support those fighting for human rights, economic, trade, and political rights; and in particular those who would not normally receive funding from other sources.
- Proposals by grass root community organizations and credible organizations that already have direct linkages with communities involved in important struggles.
- Projects that are supported or housed within a trade union movement in a particular country. Organizations that involve OPSEU members in the Social Justice Fund work as much as possible e.g. through education tours and meeting with project beneficiaries; as there is much for OPSEU Social Justice Fund to learn from these projects.
- Applications from unions, grassroots community organizations and civil society based in Canada. OPSEU is open to possible partnerships with other Canadian based unions if there is a demonstrated need.
- Funding of trade union solidarity by funding international projects that meet our guiding principles and funding criteria.
- Projects directed by those most impacted.
- Projects that show a clear analysis on race, gender, class, and other systemic oppressions to guide organizing and outcomes.
- Opportunity to partner with Equity seeking groups including OPSEU groups.
- Secular approach to issues and organizing.
- Groups that organize to build power and to create systemic change
- Funding organization has a Statement of Accountability or can demonstrate how they are accountable to racialized and other marginalized groups most impacted by the project.

You can download the Application for project funding on OPSEU website. For more information please contact OPSEU Equity Unit at The Live and Let Live Fund is dedicated to exclusively supporting

organizations that are actively involved in combatting HIV/AIDS in Ontario and Southern Africa.

The Social Justice Fund Board and the Live and Let Live Fund Board are two distinct governing bodies. Each board includes seven members who serve two year terms. The work of each is guided by bylaws.

The boards are provided with professional and administrative support from OPSEU staff in the Equity Unit. Each board reviews all proposals submitted to them for funding based on established criteria. The current 2017/18 board members include:

- **Warren (Smokey) Thomas**  
OPSEU President
- **Carol Mundley**  
Provincial Women's Committee  
Social Justice Chair
- **Morgen Veres**  
Provincial Human Rights Committee  
Live & Let Live Chair
- **Joseanne Job**  
Provincial Young Workers Committee
- **Philip Shearer**  
Region 1 Executive Board Member
- **Jean Luc Roy**  
Region 6 Executive Board Member  
International Solidarity Work
- **Michel Bisailon**  
Region 6 Executive Board Member  
International Humanity Work

Fund proposals are currently geared towards the support of community projects, trade unions, Indigenous rights, education, health, poverty alleviation, supporting civil society, emergency and humanitarian solidarity, anti-privatization and the fight against exploitation of communities by corporations and international trade Treaties.

The following CARRIED at the October 25, 2017 Executive Board Meeting:

## BOOKLETS ON HIV

**Whereas** OPSEU, CUPE, UNIFOR and CLC have booklets on HIV; and

**Whereas** CCOHS has a worksheet on occupational protection and prevention of HIV; and

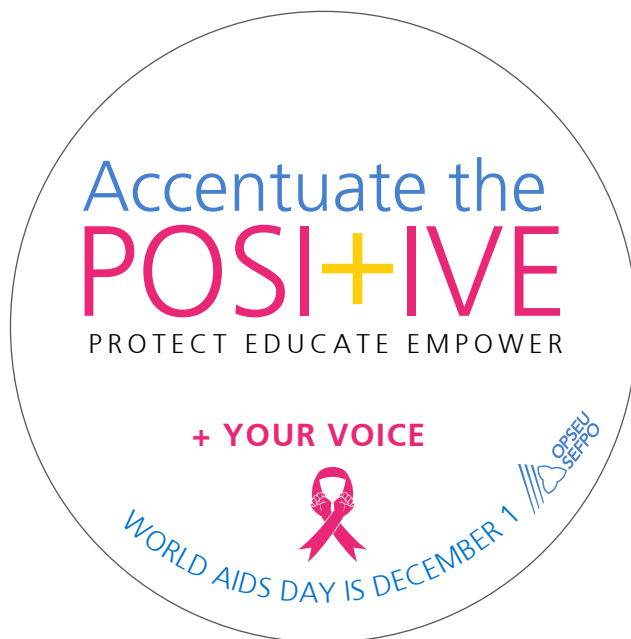
**Whereas** OPSEU represents members in Casey house in Fife house that are experts working with PWA (persons with AIDS); and

**Whereas** OPSEU already partners with Ontario AIDS network through the live and let live fund; and

**Whereas** OPSEU represents workers and workplaces where many vulnerable populations seek service; and

**Whereas** it is reported there is an increase in stigma related reactions to HIV in the workplace;

**Therefore be it resolved that** OPSEU education communication and campaigns units consult with partners and live and let live fund chair to *develop an OPSEU HIV booklet and appropriate resources* that include these resources of Stigma and harm reduction with funds to be drawn from the Live and Let Live Fund.





## PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE PERIOD 2017 TO MARCH 2018

### PROJECT: MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH: TRANSFORMING INDIGENOUS LIVES IN TOTONICAPÁN, GUATEMALA (MNCH)

#### MNCH Facts in Totonicapán, Guatemala

- The Department of Totonicapán is a predominantly Indigenous Maya K'iche' (93%) Department (province) where more than 80% of the population of half a million people live below the poverty line.
- Only 49 physicians, 37 professional nurses and 127 auxiliary nurses provide formal public health services for all of Totonicapán.
- 210 out of 100,000 pregnant women in Totonicapán will die during childbirth – 26x more likely than women in Canada.
- Nearly 70% of expectant mother in Totonicapán give birth at home with the aid of a



traditional Indigenous midwife.

- Despite being key MNCH providers, midwives are under-resourced and often face discrimination from conventional health care providers.
- Guatemala has the third highest rate of chronic malnutrition in the world - with nearly eight out of ten Indigenous children suffering from stunted growth.

#### How the MNCH project is transforming Indigenous lives in Totonicapán, Guatemala

- *Horizons of Friendship* and our Guatemalan partner, the *Association for Health Promotion, Research and Education (PIES de Occidente)*, are currently implementing the second year of this four-year project (April 2016 to March 2020).



- We are working with 974 traditional Indigenous midwives to compliment their knowledge with training in the latest maternal, newborn and child health practices, teaching them the signs of high-risk pregnancies, and equipping them with essential medical supplies to assist with a safe, clean, delivery.
- The project is also supporting pregnant women, mothers, and their male partners by providing culturally appropriate education and counselling support on breastfeeding, prenatal and newborn care, immunization, nutrition and breast
- and ovarian cancer – all in the Maya K'iche' language spoken by the vast majority of Totonicapán's residents.
- **By project end we will have reached over 202,000 Indigenous women, children and men** in the Department of Totonicapán, Guatemala, and **8,680 Canadians** will be

engaged directly in public education programming

**In the first year and half, the MNCH project has benefitted more than 70,000 Indigenous Maya K'iche' women, children and men!**

### Creating Canadian Partnerships

The **MNCH** project means to encourage Canadians to develop a deeper understanding of maternal, newborn and child health issues and to become actively involved in addressing these challenges.

- Horizons will build working relationships with concerned vocational groups such as doctors, midwives, nurses, community health workers - in particular those working with marginalized populations - and specialists in public health and early childhood development
- Each year, Canadian members from the above vocational groups will travel to Guatemala



with the goal of enabling increased understanding and knowledge sharing

- Annual visitors from Guatemala will present on MNCH issues to diverse public audiences, delivering forums, presentations and round-table discussions at elementary schools, colleges and universities and hospitals
- Exchange participants, along with the Canadian public, will have the opportunity to contribute to a lessons learned document that will continue to be used beyond the life of the project

These visits will provide many opportunities for public engagement on MNCH themes and the way individuals and organizations work to contribute to a more equitable, global society.

### **How You Can Save Lives!**

The MNCH project has a \$13.2 million budget, 85% of which is generously funded by Global Affairs Canada while Horizons of Friendship must contribute 15% or \$1.8 million (approx. \$450,000 annually). This means for every \$1 donated to *Horizons of Friendship*, *Global Affairs Canada* will match \$6.

OPSEU Members can support the MNCH project by:

- **Making a donation to provide the match for**
  - Training sessions for midwives (\$17 for 10 workshops)
  - Health workshops for 5 women (\$35 for 10 workshops)
  - One Year of Nutritional Supplements (\$90 for 10 children under 2)
  - Community Emergency Plan Manuals (\$178 for 500 manuals)
- **Challenging local community service clubs to match your donation**
- **Connecting Horizons with medical and educational institutions to host**

**visiting delegations of traditional midwives for presentations and public events**

- **Hosting presentations and events by Horizons staff and visiting delegates to help profile the project in the community**

We also invite **OPSEU members** to travel to visit the project in Guatemala and to participate with us in educational activities here in Canada!

Contact Hannah Matthews, Resource Development Officer at 1.888.729.9928 ext. 13 or [hmatthews@horizons.ca](mailto:hmatthews@horizons.ca) or visit our website [www.horizons.ca](http://www.horizons.ca) for more information





33 lead midwife trainers are in the process of replicating their training for 931 other midwives.



Over 30,000 women in 187 discussion groups attended regular meetings focused on MNCH best practices.



Health educators visited over 9,000 family members during household visits in the K'iche' communities with the worst MNCH indicators.



Despite their important role attending 69% of all births, Indigenous midwives have in the past received no formal training or recognition from public health authorities.



Improving MNCH in Totonicapán critically requires improving Indigenous women's access to maternal health services and ensuring consistent quality.



More than 2,100 members of the Canadian public were engaged in the first 18-months of the project through presentations, discussions and special events, many of which involved young people.





Patricia Maria Oxlaj with her son (centre), a PIES de Occidente midwife (left) and Horizons' Executive Director, Patricia Robelleo (right).



Patricia María Oxlaj, a young, Indigenous Maya K'iche' woman living in Totonicapán, Guatemala, was 24 when she became pregnant with her first son. She resides in one of the departments (province) with the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the country, where Indigenous women are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth as non-Indigenous women. As her pregnancy continued, Patricia noticed that breathing became increasingly difficult for her.

In the fall of 2016, a Health Educator under *Horizons of Friendship* (Horizons) and the Association for Health Promotion, Research and Education's (PIES) Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) project conducted a household visit with Patricia after walking numerous hours on the dirt paths leading up to her home.

The Health Educator helped Patricia recognize her shortness of breath as a warning sign of a high risk-pregnancy. Patricia was promptly referred to the department hospital - a journey taking

approximately 3 hours given the village's terrain and its remoteness. At the hospital, doctors let Patricia know that had she not sought out medical attention, her own life and the life of her baby would have been in grave danger.

Patricia's son, who was due in January 2017, was born in November 2016 - three months premature - but both mother and child are alive and healthy.



## JUSTICE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS (J4MW)

**Name of Project:** Justice for Migrant Workers: Community Caravan Promoting Labour and Human Rights

### A. BACKGROUND

#### Organizational Profile

Justicia for Migrant Workers (“J4MW” or “Justicia”) traces its origins to 2001, when a group of community / labour activists investigated the case of 20 migrant workers whose employer sent them home for standing up for their rights at work. Since then Justicia

has worked diligently with migrant workers participating in the Canadian Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program and the Low Skilled Workers Program as well as farmworkers without status. Our aim is to create a social justice movement that promotes the rights of migrant workers and is led and directed by migrant workers themselves.

Promoting workers’ rights entails fighting for spaces where workers can articulate their experiences

and challenge their conditions without losing their work or being repatriated. We start with workers’ concerns and assist them to individually and collectively devise strategies with our support and the support of our partners in the larger community. A major part of our work is building trust with the workers and facilitating their leadership and engagement in challenging the systemic conditions that affect their lives.

## Building Grassroots Solidarity

Our work is transnational in scope. It considers the effects of globalization within the context of stolen native land here in Canada and in “sending countries”. We see Canada as being complicit in benefitting from and creating poverty in the Global South. We work with unions, lawyers and other community and health organizations to build local, national and transnational solidarity. We also work in solidarity and respect for the original peoples of the continent, including First Nations peoples and struggles here.

## Why Work with Migrant Workers is Important

Migrant workers, as a racialized and marginalized group, face numerous forms of exclusion and discrimination. Migrant workers face obstacles to asserting their rights because of the systemic conditions in which

Canada’s migration programs

operate. For example, the majority of migrant workers we work with:

- are only legally allowed to work with the employer listed on their work permit
- must live in employer-provided housing
- can be sent home by their employers for any reason, including standing up for their rights to a safe workplace or getting injured at work
- are working poor and lack access to Canada’s social safety net

We have seen that migrant workers are provided few resources with which they can advocate for their rights; indeed, to the contrary, the system actively dissuades them from learning about their rights or defending them.

Migrant farm workers have been integral to the survival of the Canadian agricultural industry but have been denied basic rights enjoyed by millions of workers due to their precarious immigration status in

Canada. Their status creates exploitative and dangerous working conditions that J4MW believes need to change.

## A. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

J4MW’s objective is to campaign for change by building a movement that is based on workers experiences and ultimately is driven by workers themselves. To this end, we are asking for funds to 1) help follow up from our successful Harvesting Freedom campaign and caravan calling for permanent residency for migrant workers, and 2) engage in general outreach to organize with workers. Justicia for Migrant Workers (J4MW) organizes migrant workers across Ontario. Over the past 15 years J4MW has organized in the following communities: Brantford, Simcoe, Delhi, Tillsonburg, Chatham, Leamington, Kingsville, Hamilton and the Niagara region.



**1. Follow up to our Harvesting Freedom Caravan: Build solidarity and call for permanent residency for all migrant workers (September – December 2016)**

In 2016, Migrant workers and their allies organized 'Harvesting Freedom' a successful caravan through 17 communities across Ontario to raise public awareness of the situations migrant workers face, build solidarity amongst workers and community members and call for permanent residency for migrant workers.

The caravan began on Labour Day weekend in Leamington, Ontario –the Tomato Capital of Canada – and ended in Ottawa on the first week of October 2016.

The caravan was organized to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker program (SAWP). Since 1966, the SAWP has brought tens of thousands of migrant farm workers to work in fields across Canada.

The Harvesting Freedom caravan started with a worker send off in Leamington, Ontario on Labour Day

**HARVESTING FREEDOM VISITED 17 CITIES ENDING ON THE FIRST WEEK OF OTTAWA.**

In each of the stops along the way, a series of outreach activities in local communities were planned to draw attention to the situation facing migrant workers and to urge solidarity with the workers.

The Harvesting Freedom campaign builds on the demands we have heard from SAWP workers through J4MW organizing, as well as on the successes of the 2010 and 2011 Pilgrimage to Freedom campaigns. In 2010, over 150 migrant workers and their allies marched from Leamington to Windsor to break the invisibility and to ensure that Canadians would not forget who is responsible for putting food on their table. In 2011, over 400 people, including 100 migrant

workers, participated in actions in across rural Ontario cumulating in a march in Toronto to demand fairness at work and status. Along the route, they traced the Underground Railroad in order to compare the dream of freedom that African Americans had in Canada and compare it to the unfreedom faced today by migrant workers. Over a three-week period several hundred migrant workers and community allies visited over 12 communities across Ontario to learn from history but also to connect the past to today's realities faced by migrant workers.

Since the last Pilgrimage J4MW has organized a series of actions to respond to fatalities and injuries. We have used public vigils to highlight the ultimate sacrifice of migrant workers who have died while working in Canada. Justicia for Migrant Workers has also undertaken legal strategies through interventions at both the Supreme Court of Canada



(Fraser case and the right to organize for farm workers) and the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal including the Ned Peart human rights case, the first human rights case to be heard by the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal.

### **GENERAL OUTREACH (FEBRUARY – MAY 2017)**

General outreach and house visits with migrant farmworkers has been and will always be the back bone of our work and we'd like to increase it with OPSEU's help. The earlier phases of this campaign have identified the workers with whom we will conduct house visits. OPSEU funding will enable us to take the next step to build our capacity to organize workers to create real change in a movement led by those most impacted.

The purpose of general outreach visits is to build relationships of trust with the workers and, based on those conversations, take our lead from them on how they want

us to work with them. We seek to foster community solidarity and assist workers to organize for change. We will also use the general outreach visits to promote the Harvesting Freedom campaign both during the caravan and after it is finished to report back and further the campaign.

As part of this outreach, we anticipate facilitating popular education (i.e.: education for change) workshops that will cover a variety of issues such as racism and sexism; undoing colonialism transnational migration; recruitment fees; and immigration, social and labour rights (i.e.: Income Security, WSIB, OHSA, ESA), etc. These workshops will start with workers' knowledge and experiences; introduce information about the systems mediating those experiences; and devise collective strategies for engaging with their employer, the legal system and other institutions that govern their lives.

We will also work with legal clinics to distribute 'know your rights'

material and facilitate referrals to community health clinics and community legal clinics. OPSEU funds would be used to prepare, print and distribute these materials.

These activities are ongoing and build on the relationships we've developed with workers over 14 years of meeting with them where they live and work. We would like to increase the number of outreach visits to workers with OPSEU's help and continue these visits after the campaign ends.

### **B. PROJECT ACTIVITIES (MAY - OCTOBER 2017)**

Specific activities of the project include:

- *Leadership /  
Facilitator / Organizer  
Development*

A major priority is advancing and supporting the leadership of migrant workers themselves. Workers are involved in all stages of planning the campaign and learn how to organize events, speak on panels, speak to the media,



Speak to MPs and other government officials, conduct outreach to other workers, help with workshops for other workers and many other important parts of being a leader in a workers' movement. With OPSEU funding, we will organize group trainings as well as one-on-one trainings and skills sharing with around 10 migrant worker leaders within J4MW.

- *Worker information gatherings:*

These are events where our migrant worker leaders will facilitate discussions and workshops in a popular education model that would cover a variety of issues such as labour rights, human rights and health & safety rights

in Ontario, immigration, social entitlements, racism and sexism; transnational migration; recruitment fees, etc.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

From these house visits, clinics, workshops and trainings, we envision bringing migrant workers together to take collective action for change on a grander scale than before.

The Foreign Temp Workers programme is the "privatization of immigration policy" that gives corporations even more control over the lives of workers and reduces labour protections for us all. If they can do it to these workers, who is next? Given the Trump phenomena in the U.S.,

we are beginning to see the real effects of driving a wedge between immigrant and other workers. "Building a wall" is clearly a call to build a wall to separate workers and prevent labour solidarity. This project aims to build bridges that will be able to cross over any wall Trump supporters try to build, bridges of international labour solidarity. With both funding and the support and solidarity with OPSEU members, we can take immigrant policy out of the control of corporate privateers and place it into the hands of those most impacted by such policies.

# AMERICAN HOLOCAUST DOCUMENTARY

***American Holocaust***, a four-part radio documentary series about the native civilizations of the Americas, their destruction by European invaders and the current resurgence of Indigenous nations. As humanity teeters on the brink of environmental catastrophe, these civilizations provide us with crucial examples of how to organize sustainable, progressive societies as they existed for time immemorial in harmony with nature while giving their people impressive economic and political rights. As the twin crises of war and environmental devastation threaten human survival itself, the wisdom that Indigenous people provide us with has become more important than ever. Through this documentary, we would like to make this wisdom as accessible as possible to tens of millions of

people who comprise our radio audience.

This documentary is inspired by the struggle of Indigenous peoples for self-determination and by *American Holocaust* (1992), an excellent book written by Professor David Stannard who teaches at the University of Hawaii. We have already recorded 26 interviews and speeches with and of Indigenous activists from both North and South America at the World Social Forum held in Montreal in August 2016. Eleven of these are interviews and 14 are speeches. A 12<sup>th</sup> interview was recorded in Toronto in October (see complete list below). We will interview additional respected activists, authors, academics, commentators and other professionals who have in-depth knowledge of Indigenous issues. Most of our interviewees are and will be Indigenous themselves and we will thereby bring voices from the grassroots to

the airwaves through partnerships with community media inside and outside Canada. Please see the project description at the end of this letter for details about the documentary.

Pacifica Radio is the biggest progressive radio network in *North America* and *Women: The Oppressed Majority* has been syndicated on its weekly show “Sprouts”. The documentary will be broadcast on January 11, 18 and 25, 2017, to coincide with the Women’s March on Washington D.C. on January 21, 2017 to protest the presidential inauguration of Donald Trump who is misogynist, racist and fascist. Hundreds of Canadian women and men are going to Washington for this important historic march. We are honoured to contribute to our U.S. and Canadian sisters’ struggle against this unacceptable man and his imminent assaults on women’s rights.

All of our documentaries have been funded by progressive Canadian unions, NGOs and community organizations. OPSEU has given \$1,000 each for three of our radio documentaries: *Women: The Oppressed Majority*, *The Latin American Revolution and Path of Destruction: Canadian Mining Companies Around the World*. We remain very grateful for this consistent support.

## DISTRIBUTION PLAN

*American Holocaust* will be distributed in Canada through the National Campus/Community Radio Association, a cross-Canada organization with over 80 members. In the United States, we aim to have the series broadcast on up to 50 stations through a strong relationship with the Pacifica Radio, the largest progressive radio network in North America.

What kind of people were the Europeans who invaded North and South America and killed about 100 million natives? What can explain the

incredible scale of this genocide and the astounding barbarism of its perpetrators? The reasons were religious, economic and political. Europe from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was a nightmarish land wracked by endless wars, religious fanaticism, rampant plagues, vicious exploitation and massive poverty all of which led to the deaths of tens of millions of people. Genocide and slavery were not only practised by European states on a large scale but morally approved by the Catholic Church, the continent's most powerful religious authority. Non-Christians especially those in foreign lands were considered subhuman "demons" and so could be killed on masse or enslaved.

The corruption of European elites and their refusal to redistribute wealth amongst their own people meant that to avoid upheaval inside Europe its poor masses had to be given access to land and wealth outside Europe especially in resource-rich North and South America. Gold,

silver and other riches from South America were desperately needed by Spain which was destitute and indebted to England. The bounty of the Americas was also crucial for European elites to enrich themselves and for European states to pay for the wars they were waging against each other for supremacy in Europe itself. European countries with more or richer colonies were in a better position to conquer other European countries not in possession of these.

We talk to Dr. David Stannard, historian and author of the book *American Holocaust* which presents a detailed account of the reasons for European savagery in the Americas, and to Dr. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, historian and native author of the book *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (2015). Other interviewees to be selected.



## REAL CIVILIZATIONS

What the Spanish, Portuguese and British colonizers of North and South America destroyed were sophisticated, advanced and sustainable indigenous societies that had existed for time immemorial. This episode looks at the Aztec, Inca and Maya civilizations in South America, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (consisting of five nations) in North America. Hernando Cortes, the Spanish conquistador who attacked the Aztecs, called their capital Tenochtitlan, “the most beautiful city on Earth”. Tenochtitlan at the end of the fifteenth century was one of the largest cities in the world with five times the population of London. Similar indigenous urban centres were spread all over North and South America mixed with smaller towns, rural farms and hunter-gatherer societies. These various native

nations were prosperous but did not impose an unsustainable burden on the environment or exploit and impoverish domestic or overseas colonies to generate wealth.

The Inca practised one of the earliest forms of socialism, striving to ensure that the basic needs of all citizens were provided. Even when at war with another nation, the Aztecs would send food and weapons to their adversaries to ensure that it was a fair fight. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy gave the vote to women 150 years before the white men did, enacted child welfare legislation a century before Europeans did and outlawed capital punishment in the fifteenth century while it still exists in the West. The Confederacy was female dominated and its constitution declared: “Women shall be considered the progenitors of the Nation. They shall own the land and the soil.”

## HOLOCAUST: NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

More than a 100 million natives were killed by European invaders in North and South America between 1492 and the 1890s. For four centuries Europeans carried out genocide campaigns against indigenous peoples wiping out 97% of them in the United States alone. In only eight years, between 1852 and 1860, the U.S. government wiped out 60% of California’s indigenous population “shooting them down like wolves--men, women and children wherever they could find them.” At Wounded Knee in South Dakota alone, in December 1890, about 300 Lakota women, children and men were massacred by the U.S. Army.

## INDIGENOUS RESURGENCE

In spite of its horrifying extent, the American holocaust failed to eradicate native peoples altogether in North and

South America. In South America, indigenous power has seen a massive resurgence in the last two decades. Ten leftist governments have taken office in Latin America since 1998 and this amazing progressive phenomenon known as the Latin American Revolution has been led by the two natives who have risen to become Presidents of Venezuela and Bolivia respectively: Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales. These indigenous leaders and the mass movements

that created them have changed the history of the continent, moving it decisively to the left and freeing it from the imperialist domination of the United States.

The government of Evo Morales has embraced the philosophy of “Living Well” which emphasizes sustainability and the harmonizing of human activities with nature. Morales has limited mining in Bolivia and insisted that industrial operations not harm nature. His government

is the first one to give nature constitutional rights.

Encouraged by South American indigenous victories and galvanized by oil operations destroying their lands, native nations in the U.S. and Canada are becoming increasingly assertive in demanding their economic and political rights, a prime example being the “Idle No More” movement in Canada.



# PREVENTING AND REDRESSING HARMFUL IMPACTS OF CANADIAN MINING ABROAD



June 2017

## OUR MISSION

MiningWatch seeks to strengthen mining-affected communities in order to:

- Put healthy communities and a healthy environment ahead of mining activities that are often promoted and protected at their expense;
- Bolster critical knowledge and skills within communities and organizations faced with the impacts of mining activities to help them place appropriate terms and conditions on mining activities, and prevent mining activities that would cause unacceptable damage to the local environment, economy, or cultural and social integrity; and

- Advocate policies to reduce the risks of mining activities for affected communities.

To achieve these objectives, we work in collaboration with a wide range of national and international organizations, networks, and coalitions, as well as local partners and allies.

## ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

### **1. Remedy Harm: Expose violence and abuse of company-run grievance mechanisms at Barrick mines and set legal precedents for effective access to remedy in Canada.**

#### **Barrick Gold – Papua New Guinea**

Large-scale mineral extraction causes serious social and environmental harm to affected communities. Frequently mines are militarized

with accompanying violence and other serious human rights violations. In many jurisdictions, there is a high degree of impunity for such crimes; effective legal remedy for harm is also not available or accessible, and there is no international redress mechanism to which those who have been harmed can turn. In recognition of this 'remedy gap', the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights recommends that companies set up their own grievance mechanisms, putting remedy in the hands of the same corporation that has perpetrated the harm.

We will continue our work with indigenous women who have suffered sexual violence at the hands of police and mine security at



Barrick Gold's Porgera Joint Venture mine in Papua New Guinea, to share their experiences with other victims of violence at Barrick mines, as well as to testify in Canada and other relevant international forums. We will conduct human rights field assessments to **document new cases of violence and publicize ongoing criminal behaviour of mine security, while critiquing the mine's abusive grievance mechanisms** and the promotion of such mechanisms globally.

We will also work with local and international partners, including the Porgera Landowners' Association, Akali Tange Association, Porgera Women's Rights Association, and legal clinics at Harvard and Columbia University, to expose and reduce the violence at these Barrick mines and ensure equitable remedy for victims.

#### **Tahoe Resources – Guatemala**

People who have been harmed by the activities

of Canadian mining companies operating overseas should have access to justice in Canada. To date, no Canadian mining company has been prosecuted successfully in Canada for harm caused by a subsidiary overseas. However, there are now more such cases before the courts than ever before. Most notably, three ground-breaking cases against HudBay Minerals for violence related to its operations in eastern Guatemala in 2007 and 2009 are currently making progress through the courts in Ontario. We will continue bringing attention to these cases in our public education work as well as supporting community partners and Canadian lawyers bringing – or considering bringing – litigation in Canada against Canadian mining companies.

More specifically, we will also continue to **collaborate closely on the lawsuit against Tahoe Resources**, the first to be brought against a Canadian mining company in

British Columbia courts. The company is being sued for negligence and battery over the shooting by mine security of peaceful protestors in front of the company's mine site in south-eastern Guatemala. Together with the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA) and the Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network, we will work to build awareness about the lawsuit and the broader community struggle to prevent further expansion of the mine, given concerns about impacts on local agriculture, water, and health.

#### **2. Prevent Harm: Strengthen legal, communications, and organizing strategies of partner organizations, Indigenous peoples, and affected communities in the global South to prevent harm from mining.**

To defend the land, water, and their own visions of development, communities are increasingly informing and

organizing themselves to prevent the entry of mining companies at an early stage — before too much has been invested and too many interests have been established. Since the bulk of Canadian mining companies are “junior” prospecting and exploration firms, communities resisting mining operations at an early stage are frequently confronting Canadian corporations. In order to undertake effective legal, communications, and organizing strategies, communities and local organizations need to have solid information about mining concessions and related corporate interests. Based on our strong relationships with organizations and communities around the world, we gather information about the track record of Canadian mining companies; we also have access to networks of independent experts who can help provide insights to challenge the rosy claims

that governments and mining companies make about jobs, economic development, and the short- and long-term impacts from proposed mine projects. We also have experience researching company records and Canadian government involvement that can inform local and regional strategizing.

### **3. Challenge Mining as Development: Educate in Canada about Canadian policy supporting a “mining development” model and build support for a different model.**

Mining is often promoted as a development strategy that generates revenue and employment, as well as business and social development. The Canadian government justifies its promotion and protection of the sector in this light. MiningWatch has worked for many years to document the ‘true costs of mining’, including externalized costs such as environmental damage and public and worker health liabilities, but also direct subsidies

and tax expenditures — not to mention tax avoidance — that give mining companies greater potential for profits at significant cost to the public. The development deficits created by mining through displacement, dispossession, and loss of livelihoods are also mostly externalized, such that a mining project, or mining as a development model for any given region, may actually produce greater costs than benefits, especially over the long term.

### **4. Spread Real News: Investigate, analyze, and communicate to frame the issues and provide timely information**

We will continue to work to ensure that mining-affected communities, workers, organizations, and networks have up-to-date information, research, and analysis through a variety of channels, including social media and traditional media as well as in-depth research. We will provide an informed and relevant critique of Canadian-



backed policies and practices, and coordinate research and action with in-country partners to illustrate and educate about the negative influence of Canadian foreign policy for the mining industry –

and the consequent responsibility of Canadian government agencies for related harms. We will continue to act as a clearinghouse of mining information for unions, communities, and other organizations

to share their experiences, demands, strategies, and solutions.

# TORONTO RESEARCH AND ACTION COMMUNITY EXCHANGE (TRACX)

*The Toronto Research and Action Community Exchange (TRACX)* is an annual program intended to match University of Toronto students with Toronto-based community organizations to engage in participatory action research for academic credit.

In keeping with our mandate to direct resources and research towards anti-oppressive, social and environmental justice projects, TRACX attempts to create critical links between the university and the wider Toronto community. All in an effort to make academic research non-voyeuristic, accountable to the communities it depends on, and multipurpose in its distribution and use as a shared resource. As part of the collective you would assist us in preparing for our annual symposium as

well as coordinating the research portion of the project in the coming fall.

We are organizing the second component of our program, which is our annual symposium. This year's symposium is titled "*What's Left? Coalition-Building and Countering the Alt-Right*". The symposium portion is organized to showcase research with a community organizing focus from students, non-students and community groups. We want to problematize and challenge perspectives on research, and build networks between socially-conscious students and grassroots community organizations to develop research proposals led by the community group's needs and priorities. We hope you can join us in helping facilitate this process as we focus on how we resist fascism, in

our relationships, in our workplaces, and in the institutions and systems that govern our daily lives.

This symposium is motivated by a need to reflect on our understanding of anti-fascism and what the practice of anti-fascist organizing looks like. How do we cultivate an understanding of what anti-fascism means, and how do we employ it in our organizing work? Students attending the symposium will be exposed to a variety of social and environmental justice causes in the city of Toronto and will be able to network with community organizations about their research interests in the areas that the community groups work in. Students and community members will also have an opportunity to learn more about issues in the communities surrounding the



campus and learn how the resources of the University could be utilized to assist with community projects.

How do we highlight research led by community organizations? What research is needed for current social justice campaigns? Our third annual symposium will again feature community-based social justice research by community

groups and students, research projects and presentations on social and environmental justice issues and workshops on current organizing work.

This is not an academic conference. We want to problematize and challenge people's perspectives on research, encourage social investigation and engage in collective, creative problem solving and skills sharing around

community concerns. How do you organize against discrimination and injustice in your own life? What movements do you participate in that confront racism, fascism, transphobia, misogyny, and Islamophobia for example? Whether you're a student, community member, activist or someone curious about activism, everyone is encouraged to participate and attend!

# ASOCIACION GRUPO DE TRABAJO REDES (AGTR)



## **Executive Summary-** *No Somos Invisibles: Constructing Solidarity through the Airwaves*

Although Asociación Grupo de Trabajo Redes (AGTR) enacts projects that improve the mental health, real world income, and empowered group consciousness of adult domestic workers in Peru, many women continue to labor in houses, isolated and ignorant of their human and labor rights, and many young girls work as modern day slaves.

Since September 2012, AGTR broadcasts a radio program entitled "*No Somos Invisibles*," (NSI) or "*We Are Not Invisible*" to approximately 13,000 listeners. The program is broadcast from Radio Unión, and is transmitted on Sunday mornings from 8am to 9am. NSI reaches women and men, raising awareness about adult

and child domestic work. The program gives voice to the voiceless, broadcasting the testimonies and opinions of adult domestic workers, and girl and boy laborers, while advocating for just and safe working conditions.

The program broadcasts discussions on diverse, but underserved and marginalized topics, such as a child's right to an education of quality, a child's right to a name, the value of local traditions and customs, the right to a non-discriminatory workplace, and the right to just compensation. The program uses inclusive language, and celebrates the broad cultural diversity found within Peru.

No Somos Invisibles remains a unique source of information. The program reaches migrants and domestic workers who have

suffered social exclusion and deep poverty. One objective of the program is to raise awareness about the risks of child work, while educating the Peruvian polity about the discrimination and exploitation of women working in domestic service. On a societal level, these women are often treated as if they are sub-human, invisible. They are marginalized due to their Andean origin, culture, poverty, gender, and domestic work.

NSI shifts public opinion in a country that believes child work is formative, especially when girls labor in domestic service. It is difficult to advocate on behalf of domestic workers, who are among the most marginalized and exploited in Peru. AGTR stands in solidarity with nuestra amiga trabajadora del hogar (our friend,



the domestic worker). This discrimination is structurally entrenched, as it is written into a law that was designed to protect domestic workers, but in practice, actually recognizes less rights for those working in domestic service. NSI is dedicated to ensuring that Peruvian society embraces values that uphold human rights.

**The program still must achieve the following objectives:**

1. Inform and raise public awareness about the situation of women and girls in domestic work.
2. Continue to raise up voices of those that are excluded by giving a voice to women and girls in domestic work through airing their testimonies, opinions, and messages.
3. Contribute to the formation of citizenship and civic responsibility in girls and women doing domestic work, explaining their rights and how to access them, as well as what to do when rights violations occur.
4. Contribute to advocacy efforts about domestic service and government accountability by hosting State level civil servants.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CoDev is a Vancouver-based non-profit, international solidarity organization working for positive and transformative social change in the Americas and which works to improve the lives of women, workers, and communities. Founded in 1985 by a group of activists who wanted to go beyond financial aid and the traditional charity model, CoDev proudly builds partnerships between like-minded organizations and individuals in Canada and Latin America to foster learning, social change, and community empowerment. These partnerships educate Canadians about Latin America and allow them to directly support locally developed and implemented projects addressing human rights, labour rights, and education. Such connections build solidarity, mutual understanding and ultimately improve prospects for

a fairer global order. Past and present CoDev supporters include the Canadian International Development Agency, unions such as Unifor, and foundations such as the Campbell-Webster Foundation.

The situation is dire for women in El Salvador. Over half of Salvadorans living in poverty are women. Additionally, the levels of physical and sexual violence threatening one half of the population are among the highest in the world. According to a recent study, El Salvador has the highest rate of femicide, or gender-motivated killing of women, in the world. Over half of all Salvadoran women experience a form of violence in their lives in one of the most unequal countries in Latin America where they can expect little to no assistance from the state.

In the 1990s, the government of El Salvador privatized a number of public

services, including healthcare. As a result, the majority of the population has inadequate access to quality healthcare and particularly affected are women and girls. For survivors of sexual violence, El Salvador's health care system serves to further deny them their basic human rights. In 1998, without public or medical consultations, abortion and miscarriage were criminalized, even in cases of rape or when the pregnancy poses a risk to the mother's life. Physical and sexual violence, unplanned pregnancies and unsafe abortions are having a significant negative affect on women's physical and mental health. According to Salvadoran health officials, suicide is now the third most common cause of death for pregnant women overall and accounts for 57% of the deaths of pregnant girls between the ages of 10 and 19.

Health care is a human right. Our partner, the Salvadoran Association for Integrated Health and Social Services (APSIES), is CoDev's partner working on the ground in El Salvador to support women's right to health care in the departments of Usulután and San Miguel. Specifically, this project titled Promoting Social Participation around Health and Women's Empowerment in El Salvador, will achieve two objectives: 1. Increase women's empowerment in 5 municipalities of eastern El Salvador (Lolotique, Nueva Guadalupe, San Buenaventura, El Triunfo, Estanzuelas) in order to enhance their active participation and economic independence and 2. Consolidate the organization of the National Health Forum (FNS) in the departments of Usulután and San Miguel in order to influence the Health Ministry (MINSAL) to enforce the human right to health care. Promoting Social Participation around Health and

Women's Empowerment in El Salvador.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Access to adequate health is a fundamental human right. This project seeks to improve access to the human right to health of the population in 5 municipalities of eastern El Salvador, through social participation, with emphasis on empowering women. Specifically, this project supports the Salvadoran Association for Integrated Health and Social Services (APSIES) and their work assisting 6 women's associations [AMUET (Association of Women of El Triunfo); AMUDES (Association of Estanzuelas Women); AMUNG (Association of Women of New Guinea); ADEMUD (Association of Lolotique Women); AMUNDES (Association of San Buenaventura Women); and the Women's Network Hope for Life] in five municipalities of the Salvadoran provinces of Usulután and San Miguel. Together,

APSIES and their partner organizations will: 1). conduct social audits of hospitals and clinics in order to improve health care in rural communities; 2). work with healthcare professionals and other institutions to implement reforms identified in the audits; and 3). deliver a 'train-the-trainer' program so that women are able to replicate workshops on issues relevant to them and their communities, specifically workshops on prenatal care.

The social audits of public health clinics and hospitals are part of a nation-wide effort by the National Health Forum to ensure that the recently expanded public health system in rural areas of El Salvador delivers care is adequately supplied and staffed and is respectful of the rural "campesino" population (peasants who are usually indigenous). The audits gathered by the participating women's organizations are presented to the medical



staff and ministry representatives at monthly meetings organized by APSIES. APSIES, health personnel, and the women's associations then work together to develop plans to resolve deficiencies identified in the audits.

In previous social audits, APSIES identified the need for comprehensive sex education and trained 240 adults and youth as educators for HIV-AIDS prevention in the municipalities of Lolotique, Nueva Guadalupe, San Buenaventura, El Triunfo, Yayantique and Guatajiagua. In coordination with the Health Ministry and Education Ministry, APSIES trained over 1500 young men and women for

practicing responsible and safe sex.

In the first year of this two-year project, the women's committees have identified **high incidences of birth defects** in their communities that can be prevented with proper prenatal care. For this reason, they propose to develop a team of women to work with expectant mothers in their communities to ensure that they have access to dietary supplements and other measures needed to prevent birth defects and deficiencies.

#### General objective:

This project, reaching 336 direct beneficiaries (270 women and 66 men), will improve access to the human right to health care services of the population in two

departments in eastern El Salvador, through social participation, with emphasis on women's empowerment. We can expect this project to yield hundreds of indirect beneficiaries, as current and future citizens of the five participating municipalities will benefit from improved health care services. In particular, current and future parents and their children will benefit greatly from learning about the prevention of birth defects through this project's sustainable 'train the trainer' community health workshops. Lastly, women and girls today and from generations to come will greatly benefit from this project's emphasis on women's empowerment and their right to live free from violence.

# KAMLOOPS FIRE FIGHTERS CHARITABLE SOCIETY

## OPERATION NICARAGUA CONVOY 2017

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The idea to deliver emergency vehicles to less fortunate countries is not a new one. Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Central America and many of its ambulances and fire trucks were used and destroyed in the civil war. Unable to replace these vehicles, the tireless volunteers who work to save others are compromised. All the members of the fire crews are volunteers with very little government assistance and most of the training and equipment is provided by charitable organizations, such as Canada's Operation Nicaragua.

To date, Operation Nicaragua has successfully shipped

14 shipping containers, containing a half million pounds of humanitarian aid. Thirteen fire trucks and 2 ambulances have been delivered and placed into active service across Nicaragua. Dozens of hospitals throughout the country have received much needed life-saving equipment. As well, hundreds of firefighters have been given Personal Protective Equipment gear to help protect themselves and the communities they serve. In the end, thousands of Nicaraguans have benefited from these donations shipped from Canada.

Over the past two years, volunteers from BC and Ontario have teamed up to fundraise and acquire retired fire trucks and ambulances from Canada. There are 5

trucks and 3 ambulances set to go. These vehicles are getting tuned up over the summer in order to prepare them for transport and delivery. These vehicles include a retired Middlesex-London ambulance, purchased with funds raised by OPSEU members and community donors, as well as another ambulance acquired from Lambton EMS and county.

In September 2017 an Operation Nicaragua convoy of 5 fire trucks and 3 ambulances will travel over 4000 km. On September 10th, the vehicles will be departing from Kamloops, B.C. (where the majority of the vehicles have been procured), and will be driven south through multiple states including: Washington, Idaho,



Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Georgia. This convoy will have stops along the way to raise awareness amongst local EMS and Fire Departments, as well as a stop in Colorado Springs for the Annual Fallen Firefighter Memorial Ceremony on September 16th.

Once in Atlanta, the vehicles will be loaded onto military cargo planes, bound for Managua, Nicaragua. Upon arrival, local members of Operation Nicaragua will then take over the journey, delivering the vehicles to communities in need. Over the years, the chiefs of all the fire departments across Nicaragua have determined the most suitable departments to receive each vehicle and equipment. The Canadian branch works alongside the chiefs in order to reach the departments most in need.

These vehicles will be serving unprotected or desperately

under-protected communities. To put this into perspective, a city of 450,000 in Canada is served by approximately 24 ambulances. In Nicaragua, a city of 200,000 is served by 1 or 2 ambulances, if they are even operational. Many of the vehicles are well over 15 years on the road with no equipment and meeting no safety standards. They are often push started, or unable to respond due to mechanical failures.

The volunteer members of Operation Nicaragua from Canada are made up of firefighters, paramedics and mechanics, as well as logistical and financial backers. Each driver will be responsible for his or her own expenses, such as hotel costs and meals. The drive will take approximately 2-3 weeks with time built in for possible mechanical issues or road conditions. We will be creating partnerships along the way with various departments to hopefully broaden the pool of donated vehicles for the future.

Personally, I am a paramedic in Middlesex-London and Elgin counties, and I am the Ontario contact for the team. Along with assistance from other OPSEU members, I have been able to help donate 2 vehicles and provide more than \$11,000 through fundraising in the local community to the project. I have traveled twice to Nicaragua, both times through Operation Nicaragua, where I was able to visit the volunteer paramedics and witness the deplorable working conditions. I was able to be present during a ceremony in Leon, where a donated firetruck from Burnaby, B.C. had recently begun its life in Nicaragua. This showed me the value and importance of the work done by this charity.

In October of 2016 I organized a trip which brought 12 Canadian paramedics to Chinandega to help train the volunteers in CPR and extrication techniques. These tools will enable them to be more confident and capable in their roles.



The EMS personnel from Chinandega, Leon, El Viejo, and other communities came out to the training sessions in force with a strong desire to develop their skills.

The goal of Operation Nicaragua is to deliver equipment and training to the local services in order for them to provide more practical and safe assistance when responding to many devastating tragedies.

We stay in touch with the paramedics and do our best to provide the equipment and training the request, based on the types of accidents/situations they respond to, such as motorcycle collisions, which are frequent.

The convoy will be documented through photographs and film, with all sponsors recognized prominently. We have had a lot of

excitement building up to this point and with only 2 months left, September 10<sup>th</sup> is closing in. After these vehicles are settled in their new communities, we will visit in following months to discern their impact on the people.





# HORIZONS OF FRIENDSHIP

## PROMOTING YOUNG WOMEN'S DEFENSE OF THEIR LABOUR RIGHTS WITHIN TRADE ZONES IN NICARAGUA

### CANADIAN ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Horizons of Friendship (Horizons) is a Canadian international development organization with charitable status based in Cobourg, Ontario. Founded in 1973, Horizons has grown over the last 40 years from a small group of concerned citizens from rural Ontario into a nationally recognized and respected non-governmental organization committed to promoting social justice and community development in Central America and Mexico (Mesoamerica). Today, we are proud to be the only nationally registered charitable organization

in the country to focus and work exclusively in Mesoamerica.

Along with our supporters, Horizons finds it unacceptable that one out of every two people in Central America and Mexico live in conditions of poverty or extreme poverty, without access to basic rights like food, health, education, and a safe environment. Our mission is to eliminate the root causes of this poverty and injustice, and our vision is a future in which place, gender, race, and language are no longer impediments to health, happiness, and dignity. To these ends, Horizons partners with grassroots organizations in seven countries to support locally driven projects that empower

poor and marginalized people to fight for their rights, improve their lives, and propel social change. We also work in Canada to raise awareness about the challenges faced by our neighbours in the South, build connections with like-minded organizations, and foster solidarity with peoples of Mesoamerica.

Our international program is currently supporting 15 community-based organizations in seven countries, from Mexico to Panama. Together we partner on projects that are creating long-term solutions to issues around health, education, food security, human labour, and women's rights. As firm believers in the old



adage that change starts at home, we support this work in the field by raising awareness in Canada and fostering solidarity with the people of Central America and Mexico.

## **NICARAGUAN PARTNER BACKGROUND**

The María Elena Cuadra Working and Unemployed Women's Movement (MEC) supports unemployed, Indigenous women, and those working in free trade zones in eight departments of Nicaragua. The organization was founded in 1994 and is an autonomous women's movement that aims for the inclusion and full participation of women in Nicaraguan society. To achieve these goals MEC works from a gender perspective to organize, educate and train women workers. MEC addresses a wide set of issues affecting women such as domestic violence as well as social, labour, and economic rights. It also engages in advocacy initiatives to promote

changes in public policy and legislation in order to improve the living standards of working and unemployed women.

## **STATEMENT OF NEED**

In Nicaragua, women represent slightly more than 50% of the population, but their growing economic contribution is undervalued. Over the past decade, Nicaraguan women have generated approximately 40% of the GDP; the female participation in the labour force grew between 1950 and 2000 from just 18% to 42%. Despite these gains, women still work and live in conditions of both gender and social inequality.

In the free trade zones, where the maquila factories are located, women represent 85% of the workforce; 60% of these women workers are between the ages of 16 and 20 years old. Women working in the free trade zones and the maquila sector are more at risk to be negatively impacted by their work because

of the instability the positions themselves, unequal treatment based on gender, and almost complete disregard for minimal labour protections.

## **PROBLEMS ADDRESSED BY THE PROPOSED PROJECT:**

**Problem 1:** Exclusion of young women. Various social and economic situations have limited the inclusion of women in various spaces, especially in public participation. Although in the last decade this situation has improved, the gap between men and women continues to be very wide. This reality is more evident among young women due to factors such as poverty, lack of education and few opportunities. Among the main causes of this condition are the lack of training and training opportunities designed for women, especially young women, by government institutions.



**Problem 2:** Young maquila workers who are victims of labor abuse do not have access to justice and require legal support. While there are some improvements in respect for the human rights of maquila workers, including a reduction in physical abuse, forced pregnancy testing, and a prohibition of child labor, women workers' rights continue to be violated on a regular and systematic basis. National authorities (Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Health, Social Security Institutes, Free Trade Zone companies, etc.) are required to enforce existing laws and to apply the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights in maquila enterprises. Among the main violations are: a lack of compliance with occupational safety regulations, excessively high production targets, non-payment of social benefits, factory closures without complying with legal procedures and without paying wages and benefits, verbal abuse by supervisors

and employers towards women workers, exploitation of the labor force through excessive working hours, occupational harassment, sexual harassment, social security medical clinics that do not adequately address the health of women workers, and unlawful dismissal (e.g. for exercising the right to organize). This system of discrimination has been made possible by the weak labor rights enforcement of the Ministry of Labour and by a public-private alliance that generates a state of legal defenselessness for Nicaraguan women workers.

## EXPECTED RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The overarching goal of this project is to contribute to the organizational and advocacy capacity of young women workers in Nicaragua's maquila sector by working toward three interrelated results:

**Result #1:** Strengthened the competencies of young women workers to better defend their labour and economic rights

**Result #2:** Improved access to justice for women maquila workers who are victims of employer abuse

**Result #3:** Made visible the failure of the state and employers to fulfill the labour and economic rights of women workers in the maquiladora sector, especially within the three municipalities of focus

The results will be achieved through the following strategic activities:

- Organizing Youth Training Camps in free trade zones for young women workers at Youth Training Camps, training 150 young women workers in the United Nations' guiding principles on labour and economic rights, and their right to health and job security.



- At Youth Training Camps, providing safe spaces for young women workers to exchange and discuss lived work experiences through dynamic, popular education and game-oriented learning.
- Strengthening the Volunteer Labour Promoters Network with up to 300 new volunteer promoters (all young women workers) acting as a resource to better defend labour and economic rights on a day-to-day basis.
- Providing legal support to 1000 maquila workers whose rights have been violated through the MEC's Judicial Cabinet and its Legal Support Workers.
- Surveying 500 women workers about the health and job security situation in Tipitapa and Managua's businesses.



# CANADIAN TOUR OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FROM ECUADOR

OCTOBER 2017



COMMON FRONTIERS CANADA

OPSEU has given key support to the alliance of national unions and social organizations that have joined together under the banner of Common Frontiers. Our work focuses on common cause campaigns and educational work around **environmental justice, labour and human rights, social justice and trade and investment.**

Our solidarity work supports local and international work that improves people's economic and social conditions across the Americas. We see the need to continue the struggle against austerity, privatization and cut backs to workers' rights and public sector jobs both in Canada and abroad while creating spaces for alternatives and collective

convergence.  
Much of the privatization

of public sector jobs is integrally linked to 'free trade' agreements that Canadian governments have been pushing across the Americas.

Common Frontiers is partnering with The Union of People Affected by Chevron-Texaco (UDAP) is a grassroots organization made up of over 30.000 people, indigenous and peasants, affected by the oil company Texaco and their irresponsible activities in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Texaco, acquired by Chevron, contaminated more than 450.000 hectares of virgin forest. The oil company dumped crude, toxic waters and polluting gases that affected ecosystems, health, cultural systems, security and food sovereignty of populations increasing poverty and exclusion.

The UDAP community has suffer serious health impacts including the highest rates of childhood leukemia in Ecuador. Cancer deaths are 130% more frequent and the mortality risk is 260% higher than in other parts of Ecuador. Cancer accounts for 32% of total deaths, 3 times more than the national average. Spontaneous miscarriages (150% more frequent than in other areas), high rates of morbidity, dermatitis, skin problems, respiratory, kidney, liver and digestive troubles are more common in this area.

To seek justice the community launched a lawsuit against Texaco (now Chevron) to obtain reparation for the damages caused in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The case has been going on in the courts for close to 24 years. The case

is emblematic of the system of impunity that allows transnationals corporations to violate Indigenous and human rights, without consequences.

From October, the 8th to 13th two members of the UDAP, Guillermo Grefa and Julio Prieto will visit Canada and participate in the legal proceedings. Their visit is a follow up to meetings and activities that took place in previous years. They will participate in the formal legal hearing and meetings with legal experts, Indigenous leaders, NGOs and trade unions.

#### **Guillermo Grefa**

is Kichwa and a representative of the UDAP and a bilingual cultural education professor in Ecuador. He is also the son-in-law of Maria Aguinda (the first signatory of the lawsuit against the oil company). His testimony in Canada is critically important for reaching justice, and defending human and environmental rights in the Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest.

**Julio Prieto** is one of the lawyers who has worked on the Chevron case for ten years and is currently residing in USA.

While in Canada Guillermo Grefa and Julio Prieto will undertake public education, and undertake events to highlight the social and environmental impacts that FTA's and transnational corporations have on Indigenous and peasant communities.

Common Frontiers has been working with UDAP for almost two years supporting their legal case in Canada. The next hearing for their case will take place in Toronto in October and it's critical that the community participate in the court hearings and also undertake public education events around their campaign in Toronto. We have begun the coordination for their visit and plan to undertake a large public event at UofT, a trip to Six Nations to meet with Indigenous leaders on their territory and a strategy meeting with

Labour and NGO's groups at the United Steel Workers office.

Common Frontiers, with its **unique links to partners in Latin America and Canada** is well positioned to connect the struggles and victories of workers across the region. Whether it be for better wages or working conditions the best way to make gains and counterbalance the increased corporate dominance is through global solidarity and continental campaigns.

- Deepen links with **youth** by expanding our partnership with York University student group, DeltaNow, and building solidarity around human rights of the Garifuna people in Honduras.
- Lead coordination of the Colombia Working group, a platform of Canadian unions, NGOs, and social organizations focused on human rights in Colombia. This year





we are working closely with the OPSEU Indigenous Mobilization and the Equity Mobilization team around this.

- Share alternatives by building spaces of convergence at both the national and international level
- Challenge the corporate Free Trade Agenda and **fight-back against NAFTA** renegotiation. We launched a Tri-national Solidarity campaign around the impacts of NAFTA which included a large public event in Mexico city earlier this summer

Common Frontiers is entirely a member supported coalition which allows us to speak out and to campaign around trade and other public policy areas.



# SINEGERIA LAB – IN COLLABORATION WITH FUNDACION, ECUADOR

## A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE EDUCATION OF LGBTI RIGHTS AND EXPERIENCE

In 2015, the Ecuadorean Institute of Statistics and Census surveyed 2,805 members of the LGBTI community in Ecuador. Over 27% reported having experienced acts of violence, while the vast majority (over 94%) reported suffering verbal abuse including shouting, insults, threats and ridicule. Another 46% said they had been arbitrarily detained because of their sexual orientation. (Flores, 2015)

Up until 1997, the Ecuadorean Constitution criminalized sexual activities between persons of the same sex. In practice, those convicted of “homosexual activity” faced up to eight years in prison. Although 1997 was a turning point in Ecuador’s legal recognition of the rights of LGBTI people, the long history of state-sanctioned

discrimination challenges the movement for LGBTI equal rights and equal respect. In addition, the influence of socially conservative Catholicism fuels the pervasive culture of homophobia and transphobia throughout the country.

Sinergia Lab in collaboration with Causana, believes that education through a creative public awareness campaign, is the strongest strategy for counteracting mainstream ignorance while also galvanizing the LGBTI community of Quito, Ecuador’s capital city, for continued work.

- **Sinergia Lab** (Sinergia: lab of ideas): uses audiovisual and photographic production of documentary content to make visible the real stories of real

people. Grounded in a strong social ethic, Sinergia Lab’s professional team works in collaboration with the community of focus throughout the creation process and makes all audiovisual material generated available to the community for their use. Sinergia Lab aims to make visible perspectives and stories that generate reflection, challenge common beliefs, breakdown cultural boundaries, democratize information and bring the public into closer relationship with unknown realities.

- **Causana** (Fundación Causana): is a grassroots feminist lesbian collective based in Quito. Causana seeks to promote

community mobilization and to generate political advocacy actions for the rights of those with identities that do not fit into the heterosexual, patriarchal and capitalist norm. Causana is a longstanding and respected collective known for its strong relationships with the LGBTI community, state institutions and social organizations.

**Goal:** Sinergia Lab, in collaboration with Causana, seeks to increase education and understanding of LGBTI rights and lived experiences in Ecuador and to build LGBTI community collaboration by directing a 6-month public awareness campaign. The campaign will center the voices, faces, and experiences of LGBTI Ecuadorians using creative content and marketing strategies to saturate targeted public spaces in Quito.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Sinergia Lab's project

**goal** is to direct a 6-month public awareness campaign in collaboration with Causana. The public awareness campaign seeks to increase education and understanding of LGBTI rights and lived experiences in Ecuador and to build LGBTI community collaboration. The campaign will center the voices, faces, and experiences of LGBTI Ecuadorians using creative content and marketing strategies to saturate targeted public spaces in Quito. Such a public awareness campaign is unprecedented in Ecuador but builds off of existing and unfolding work done by both Sinergia Lab and Causana.

Sinergia Lab celebrates the following outcomes of the project:

- Re-ignited the discussion around the existence of conversion clinics in Ecuador.

- Generated international interest of the situation in Ecuador, as well as starting an international discussion in other countries where these clinics exist.
- Created strategic alliances between international NGO Avaaz and Causana.
- Encouraged the Ecuadorean Ministry of Health to create a new methodology for the closure of these clinics as well as propose adequate regulation. Generated a new online system where victims of the clinics can file a formal complaint.
- Catalysed the closing down of five conversion clinics.

Sinergia Lab grounds its work in a strong social ethic defined by collaboration with the community of focus from beginning to end. In addition to being led by Ecuadorean photographer and lesbian activist Paola Paredes, *Libertad de ser Yo* will also be shaped by





its existing collaborative relationship with Causana during the detailed planning, execution, and assessment of the campaign. In addition to a vast network of LGBTI Ecuadorians, Causana functions as a source of historic information in both data and narrative form that captures some of the history of the LGBTI experience in Ecuador. Further,

Causana consistently creates open source educational materials to support the rights of LGBTI people.

**Strategies:** Sinergia Lab has a variety of approaches focused on creative communication strategies that can reach broad and targeted audiences. Sinergia Lab's competencies include research and surveys, digital and web

design, production, film, television, advertising, as well as social media and public relations campaigns. Media tactics that use art and film strategies are often effective ways to draw attention to human rights and social justice issues. Some of the strategies we will implement for our campaign are as follows:



# TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMUNITY – BOBCAYGEON

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2017, our group, *“Truth and Reconciliation – Bobcaygeon”*, plans to hold a special arts and educational initiative. Our work is to support efforts towards reconciliation of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Canadians in our local community and the surrounding region of Kawartha Lakes and to work together to create systemic change. This event and other activities during the year would encourage the active participation of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Canadians in establishing and maintaining respectful relationships among peoples and with the natural world around the Kawartha Lakes area. In light of some recent conflicts around the issue of the right to tend and harvest wild rice by First Nations peoples

in the lakes in our area, we seek to expand our public dialogue and education on this issue. Through arts and culture we seek an open and honest conversation to understand the diverse histories and experiences of both the Indigenous and Non-Indigenous communities and we want to establish a respectful relationship among people in our region going forward. We are planning a special workshop production and related events in mid-October, 2017. Through this workshop and other educational activities, we will try to come to terms with events of the past in a way that “overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people”(Introduction, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 2015). This initial workshop/production would take place over a one weekend in early

November and then during the following weeks, it would be workshopped in selected secondary schools and community organizations for ongoing public dialogue and action towards reconciliation. Through the Committee’s various educational activities we hope to “inspire Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples to continue to transform Canadian society so our children and grandchildren can live together in dignity, peace and prosperity on these lands we now share” (Introduction, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*).

Truth and Reconciliation – Bobcaygeon chapter is a not-for-profit community organization formed in October 2015. It is made up of individuals from the community, a group of non-Indigenous local residents who came together to learn about

Truth and Reconciliation and have a sincere desire to make some positive contributions to promote awareness to others in our community and to work towards systemic social change. A small committee of TRC Bobcaygeon meets with Indigenous elders and leaders from Curve Lake First Nation on a regular basis to ensure that our ideas and actions are in concert with their aims and their hopes for action around reconciliation in this region. Since coming together we have been active in our community in organizing our own events and supporting events with other partners.

During the summer of 2017 we have hosted four separate movie nights in Bobcaygeon as well as two special workshops on Reconciliation, the first an Introduction to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, the second on The Language of Reconciliation.

Drew Hayden Taylor was commissioned by

Tarragon Theatre in Toronto to write a play on the wild rice issue and this play, entitled *"Cottagers and Indians"* will be performed in Toronto in February 2018. Truth and Reconciliation – Bobcaygeon is working with Drew Hayden Taylor and Tarragon Theatre to workshop the play at Lakeshore Arts Barn (Globus Theatre) and in various secondary schools in the area.

We believe that we have both the experience and the capacity to carry out the project. In our short history we have learned that the settler community in our region is ready to be engaged on all of the issues relating to honouring First Nations in our area, understanding the histories of both communities and grappling with how we might build stronger relationships in the future. Our Best Practices include providing what we hope is a safe space for people to come together and relate their personal experiences, fears and hopes for the future. This has

been demonstrated in particular at our movie nights and summer workshops where we have followed up with either a circle or an open discussion with participants.

Lead by Elders or community leaders from Curve Lake First Nation, the circle provides an opportunity for non-Indigenous people to challenge their own histories and for their own privilege to be challenged in an educational, non-threatening environment. In a small community we reached out to more than 150 people over 2 nights. It has inspired us to hold more educational events and also given us the confidence to plan a major arts and cultural initiative in fall, 2017. As well, we have established some key partnerships in our community – with Curve Lake First Nation, the Gaming Centre, churches (the United Church and Presbyterian Church in particular), other community organizations and the arts community





(specifically Indigenous playwright, Drew Hayden Taylor as well as the Lakeview Arts Barn/ Globus Theatre) – all of which will only enhance our capability to carry out our project.

We believe that our project is extremely important in our community especially in light of some of the potential conflicts around the issue of the right of First Nations peoples to tend and harvest wild rice in the lakes in our area. By continuing our education work and engaging in a special arts and culture project, we are confident that by engaging in

a meaningful dialogue and education to raise awareness of traditional ways that even more non-Indigenous in our communities will be open to building a vision of reconciliation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in our region.

We do not need any form of authorization from another organization to proceed with our project. In stating that, we will be seeking the cooperation of local school boards and teacher organizations if we are in fact funded to adapt our workshop production for secondary schools and/or post-secondary

schools in our region.

Our targeted audience and participants include Non-Indigenous – the youth of our community as well as adults, families and seniors, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. By promoting our event and activities in the local community, through newspapers, social media, within our churches and community organizations and at major community events, we hope to encourage widespread participation in the major theatre/ workshop production and related educational events in the fall of 2017.

## Northern Indigenous Food Markets – Organizing for Sustainability of Markets

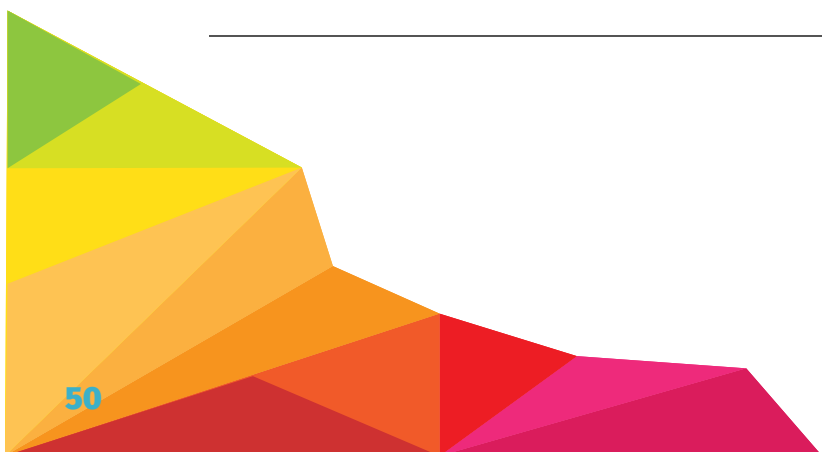
### Proposal Summary

At its 2015 Convention, Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) committed to fund projects that provide healthy and affordable food to northern Indigenous communities, recognizing that systemic poverty and inequality are the cause of much of the despair facing Indigenous communities. In response to this resolution, in April 2016, the OPSEU Social Justice Board donated \$50,000 and partnered with Food Share Toronto to revitalize a recently dormant project to set up food markets in remote Northern Indigenous communities, including Fort Albany, Moosonee, Moose Cree, Kashechewan and Attawapiskat. As a result of such markets in the past, produce prices were up to 50% less than those in the Northern Stores.

The markets were successful for a while but were unable to sustain themselves due to lack of adequate training and involvement among local residents in the territories. Food Share has learned from its errors and decided to re-vitalize the markets after proper consultation, organizing and training with the impacted communities. Realizing that community organizing and proper consultation are precursors to successful and sustainable food markets, Food Share partnered with OPSEU Indigenous members to take the time and do it right.

Crystal Sinclair, co-founder of Idle No More Toronto, Region 5 Indigenous Circle rep and Board member of Food Share Toronto, works closely with Food Share Toronto staff to plan and develop the markets. In particular, Crystal brings her knowledge and experience as a Cree woman and her organizing skills to the project. On **December 10-19 2017**, Crystal and Carolynne Crawley, Food Share staff assigned to the project, visited the communities of Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Attawapiskat and Moosonee/Moose Cree to organize and train community members how to distribute the food and collect and manage funds in a sustainable manner. It is important that the project be led by and for each community with the support of Elders, Chiefs and Band Councilors.



[illegible]



"As the years progress one increasingly realizes the importance of friendship and human solidarity. And if a 90-year-old may offer some unsolicited advice on this occasion, it would be that you, irrespective of your age, should place human solidarity, the concern for the other, at the centre of the values by which you live."

*Nelson Mandela*



[www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org)