



# Introduction to the International Solidarity Committee

# A brief history

- ✎ In **1999** delegates to BCGEU's convention passed a resolution to establish the BCGEU International Solidarity and Humanities Fund.
- ✎ Later, the fund was **renamed** the BCGEU Diane L. Wood International Solidarity and Humanity Fund in recognition of the international work done by former secretary-treasurer Diane Wood.
- ✎ BCGEU contributes **30 cents per member per month** to the fund to help support a number of projects and partner our organization with different unions, community groups and non-governmental organizations.
- ✎ In 2024 delegates at the triannual convention approved increasing the fund from 25 cents to 30 cents in recognition of the important work being done around the world.

# What does the International Solidarity Committee Do?

Make recommendations to the PE regarding:

- ☞ union **policies** in support of international solidarity
- ☞ **funding** of solidarity and development projects through the Diane L. Wood International Solidarity Fund
- ☞ **donations** in response to emerging humanitarian crises
- ☞ relevant **resolutions** to BCGEU, BCFed, NUPGE and CLC Conventions
- ☞ **promoting** the work of the committee and international solidarity amongst members, the labour movement and the community.

# Key concepts

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – poverty, education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, global partnership.



In addition to the MDG we accept applications from organizations supporting LGBTQ, workers of color, workers with disabilities, refugees, and others who share our values and beliefs.

# Key concepts

**Charity** – short-term solutions to a problem, crisis management, demands fast action, working within the existing power structures.

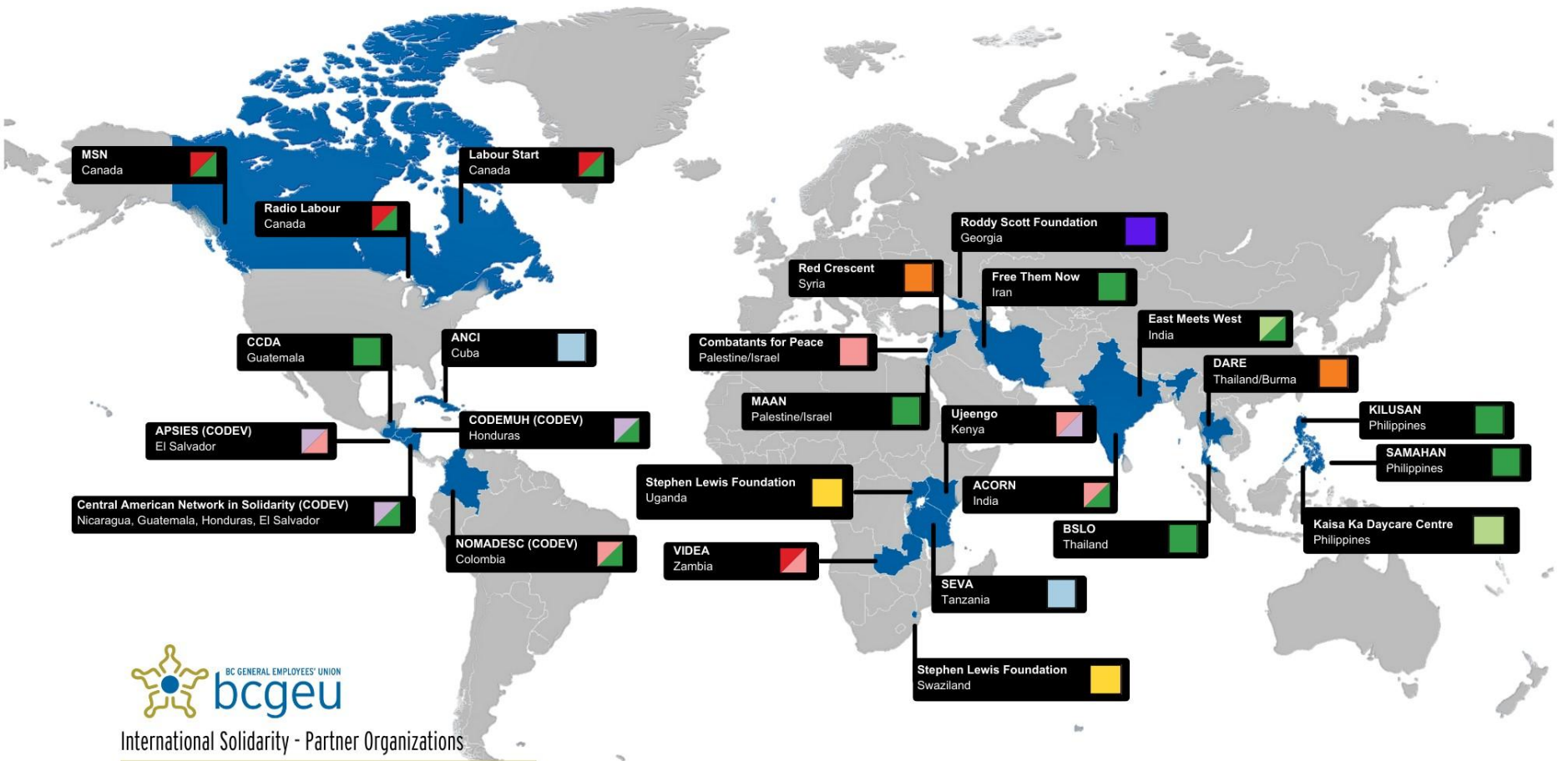
**Solidarity** – treating people as equals, working at the roots of the problem, challenging the power structures, recognizing your privilege.



# Key concepts

**Social Justice** – A concept based on a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and individuals and groups are given equal opportunity, fairness, civil liberties, and participation in the rights, freedoms and responsibilities valued by society.

As a union, we are in a unique position  
– we understand international  
solidarity, and we have the means and  
responsibility to make real changes



**MSN**  
Canada

**Labour Start**  
Canada

**Radio Labour**  
Canada

**CCDA**  
Guatemala

**ANCI**  
Cuba

**Red Crescent**  
Syria

**Roddy Scott Foundation**  
Georgia

**Free Them Now**  
Iran

**Combatants for Peace**  
Palestine/Israel

**East Meets West**  
India

**APSIES (CODEV)**  
El Salvador

**CODEMUH (CODEV)**  
Honduras

**MAAN**  
Palestine/Israel

**Ujeengo**  
Kenya

**DARE**  
Thailand/Burma

**KILUSAN**  
Philippines

**Central American Network in Solidarity (CODEV)**  
Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador

**NOMADESC (CODEV)**  
Colombia

**Stephen Lewis Foundation**  
Uganda

**ACORN**  
India

**SAMAHAN**  
Philippines

**VIDEA**  
Zambia

**SEVA**  
Tanzania

**BSLO**  
Thailand

**Kaisa Ka Daycare Centre**  
Philippines

**Stephen Lewis Foundation**  
Swaziland



## LabourStart Canada

Listen to a September 2025 interview with BCGEU President Paul Finch [here](#)

- News and campaigning website of international trade union movement
- Offer labor headlines in 35 languages
- ActNow campaigns mobilize online support for unions and workers
- Host worldwide global solidarity conferences
- Driven by volunteers
- Have the network and ability to support BCGEU messaging

# RadioLabour

- Labour movement's radio service
- Since 2010 produced newscasts about union issues and activities
- Produces a weekly Canada Report on [rabble.ca](http://rabble.ca), which includes Canadian and international labour news
- Produces activist podcasts to support specific union activities. A 2024 podcast featured Paul Finch on the LifeLabs negotiations.
- Service is produced by volunteer reporters who are accredited by the International Federation of Journalists.
- BCGEU is a founder of RadioLabour



The screenshot shows the RadioLabour website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a red circular logo containing 'RL' and a speaker icon, followed by links for Home, About, Reporting, Listening, and Contact. The main content area features the title 'RadioLabour' and a specific podcast entry: 'Labour at the UN's COP 28 climate change conference'. Below the title is a portrait of DJ Pohl, a woman with brown hair, smiling. To the right of the portrait is a text description: 'The UN's COP 28 climate change conference was held in Dubai, UAE, from November 30 to December 12, 2023. Labour's position on the climate change crisis was presented by BCGEU member DJ Pohl.' Below the text, it indicates 'Duration: 9'24"'. At the bottom, there is a video player interface with a blue play button, a progress bar showing '0:00 / 0:00', and a speaker icon.

# Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)

- With the support of the BCGEU, MSN is collaborating with unions and women's organizations, primarily in Central America and Mexico, to win and defend the union and gender rights of garment workers.
- Some current initiatives:
  - Lobby international apparel brands and manufacturers to with the reinstatement of workers fired for organizing independent unions
  - Active participant in campaign to convince Fruit of the Loom to reverse its decision to close two unionized factories in Honduras.
  - In El Salvador – joining with union and women's partner organizations in campaign to ensure that employers comply with their new legal obligation to provide childcare services for all their employees
  - In Mexico, working closely with local and national Mexican independent unions and labor rights organizations to promote freedom of association and gender rights of workers under the country's labor justice reform.



# BCGEU - CODEV PARTNERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



## CODEMUH - Honduras

**OH&S Medical and Legal Advice**  
 MAQUILA WORKERS FACING UNFAIR DISMISSALS FOUND SUPPORT AT CODEMUH. 32 WORKERS RECEIVED MEDICAL LEGAL ADVICE 167 RECEIVED LEGAL ADVICE 14 LEGAL CASES FOLLOWED UP 54 LAWSUITS FILED

**Education, Organizing & Mobilizing**  
 WORKERS FROM GILDAN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL GARMENT CORPORATIONS ARE FIGHTING FOR FAIR SETTLEMENTS AFTER ILLEGAL FACTORY CLOSURES



**Advocacy & State Accountability**  
 CODEMUH AND THE MAQUILA WORKERS ARE PUSHING THE NATIONAL CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE HEALTH AT THE WORKPLACE BILL, WHICH WILL CREATE THE LEGISLATION FOR OH&S IN HONDURAS.

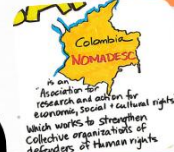
THE HONDURAN WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE WORKS WITH SWEATSHOP WORKERS IN CORTES PROVINCE.  
 THE BIGGEST MAQUILA INDUSTRY HUB IN CENTRAL AMERICA.



**Pedagogical Accompaniment**  
 STUDENTS FROM 32 GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS ARE STUDYING IN THE INTERCULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLES. THEY COME FROM INDIGENOUS, AFROCOLOMBIAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES.



## Nomadesc - Colombia



NOMADESC WORKS WITH HUMAN RIGHT DEFENDERS IN SOUTHWESTER COLOMBIA  
 NOMADESC - BCGEU PARTNERSHIP BEGAN IN 2007

**Strategic Litigation**  
 NOMADESC REPRESENTS VICTIMS IN CASES OF STATE VIOLENCE IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COURTS IN 2024 AT LEAST 2 CHIEFS OF THE POLICE HAVE BEEN FOUND GUILTY FOR THE ASSASSINATION OF YOUNG PROTESTORS.

**PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INFORMATION**  
 NOMADESC HAS PRESENTED THE DOCUMENTARY "VANDALS, EPICS FOR DIGNITY" IN VARIOUS FILM FESTIVALS. THE FILM AIMS TO DECRIMINALIZE THE SOCIAL PROTEST IN COLOMBIA



**Ongoing Leaders training on OH&S**  
 LEADERS FROM WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS OF GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR AND NICARAGUA HELD WOMEN'S VOICES IN THE MAQUILA\* IN NOV 2024

## The Network - Central America

REDCAM - Central American network of women in solidarity with maquila workers  
 TEMPLE SI PERO CON DIGNIDAD



SIX WOMEN'S ORGS FROM GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR, NICARAGUA AND HONDURAS ARE MEMBER OF THE NETWORK  
 THE NETWORK - BCGEU - CODEV - COMPONENT 3'S PARTNERSHIP BEGAN IN 2016

**Implementation of Strategic Regional Agenda**  
 THE NETWORK ESTABLISHED ITS REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS TO HOLD STATE AND MAQUILA EMPLOYERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR LABOUR RIGHT VIOLATIONS

## BCGEU - Codev Canada



Codev was born in 1995 from the commitment of union and grassroots activists.

BCGEU PARTICIPATED IN THE CODEV MULTI-UNION DELEGATION TO EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS IN NOV 2024  
 BCGEU SHAREHOLDER PROGRAM SUPPORTS GILDAN WORKERS IN HONDURAS



**Education and Mobilization**  
 CODEV AND BCGEU HELD THE ONLINE INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN MAY 2025 TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH AT THE WORKPLACE BILL IN HONDURAS

## APSIES - El Salvador

**Women's Collective Power**  
 MEMBERS OF FIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS CAN SUSTAIN THEIR FAMILIES, AND THEIR CHILDREN CAN KEEP STUDYING



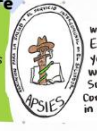
APSIES STAND FOR SALVADORAN ASSOCIATION FOR INTER-COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
 APSIES WORKS IN RURAL AREAS OF ISITLAPAN AND SAN MIGUEL MUNICIPALITIES



**Building Youth's Power**  
 YOUNG PEOPLE FOUND THE WAY TO STAY IN EL SALVADOR INSTEAD OF MIGRATING TO THE US. THEY ARE DEVELOPING THEIR ASSOCIATIONS WITH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GOALS.

**Organizing to Access Healthcare**  
 THE INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY NETWORK STRENGTHENED BY APSIES HAS BEEN ABLE TO SUPPORT WOMEN WITH CANCER WHO NEED ADVANCE CARE.

In 2006 BCGEU partnered with APSIES in El Salvador. Even in the civil war years, Salvadorans were building civil society. They support community public health in rural areas.



## YOU + EMERGE = IMPACT

Since 2005, Emerge has been on a journey of supporting institutionalized survivors of trauma including childhood sexual abuse through trauma-sensitive programming to heal, empower and emerge.

YOUR SUPPORT ALLOWS US TO REACH  
MORE SURVIVORS ACROSS SRI LANKA



## Emerge Lanka

- Emerge works with girls who have survived abuse, exploitation, and extreme childhood trauma and have had the courage to speak out, stand up for their beliefs, and protect others. The program supports teens in healing, stepping into their power, and living self-determined lives.

# Georgia-Roddy Scott Foundation – English Language and Critical Thinking Development

## Participants:

- 120 students
- 8 groups
- Georgian and Kist youth

## Impact:

- Strengthened academic success
- Boosted linguistic competence
- Promoted intercultural communication

## Goal:

- To teach English alongside critical thinking skills fostering social integration

## Outcomes:

- Most pre-university students achieved top scores in national English exams
- Other students showed high performance in year end assessments
- Improved English proficiency and critical thinkings
- Kist students enhances their Georgian language skills through peer interaction





## Generation for Peace Society

- New society that works with an Afghan news agency organization to gather information regarding the Taliban's violations of women's rights

# INDIA -Acorn International

## Acorn International

- Support from the BCGEU Intersol Committee has been critical in building ACORN India capacity to organize informal workers and their communities. For example, ACORN affiliates, the Hawkers Joint Action Committee, is now the third largest national federation of hawkers representing more than 250,000 workers, as well as the newly established Gig Workers Association which has conducted two successful strikes and been able to register as a union.



# IRAN – Free Them Now

- Cooperates with the campaign against government repressions
- Supports and aids families of detainees (14 workers and 21 teachers in 2024)
- Help activist fleeing Iran or those fired from work

Campaign against execution,  
The jailed worker Abbas Deris is in immediate danger of execution



Iran and “woman, life freedom” revolution



A conference in support of the oil workers’ protests and in defence the jailed workers, November 5<sup>th</sup> 2023



# Campaign to Free Political Prisoners in Iran

- The **Campaign to Free Political Prisoners in Iran (CFPPI)** is a non-governmental, non-profit organization founded in 2006 by former Iranian political prisoners residing in the UK. As one of the first organizations advocating globally for the release of political prisoners in Iran, CFPPI is dedicated to amplifying the voices of detainees and their families while actively working to end all forms of torture and abolish the death penalty in the country.
- Raise global awareness about the plight of political prisoners in Iran, exposing the regime's human rights violations. By building international solidarity, we seek to pressure the regime in Iran to release political prisoners, end torture, and abolish the death penalty.

# KENYA- Ujeengo

- With the support of BCGEU, Ujeengo Kenya has reached over 235 women and girls.
- In Nairobi, working collaboratively with community champions, local leaders, government security representatives, Mbagathi hospital workers and county government officials, Ujeengo Kenya provides access to medical care, psychosocial support and rescue responsiveness to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Trained caregivers in trauma-informed care, stress management, legal rights education, financial literacy, and peer support strategies.
- Trained over 20 teen girls aged 13-17 in communication skills, advocacy, life skills and trauma management through group discussion, storytelling, games and art therapy.



# PALESTINE ISRAEL – MAAN Workers Association

- Active for 25 years in defending and organizing workers in Israel.
- MAAN's systematic action to defend and organize workers in privatized institutions – including Palestinian workers in Israel and the settlements, as well as workers in health, education, and human rights sectors defines it as a workers' organization making a significant contribution to advancing organized labor and halting arbitrariness and systematic rights violations.
- MAAN's profile as an organization based on equal partnership between Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs, men and women, is of paramount importance especially in a situation of a prolonged ethnic conflict.
- With BCGEU support MAAN promotes social and labor rights for Palestinians working in Israel, East Jerusalem and Area C.



# PHILIPPINES

## Cebu

- Supported organizers of the Labour Solidarity Program under the Precarious Workers in the Fisheries Project
- Assist young workers to organize to use talents in advocacy and socially relevant endeavors
- Support women-worker organizing – formed the Independent Vendors for Empowerment and Development Federation

## LORENA-KAISAKA Malabon Daycare

- For almost two decades the BCGEU has supported LORENA-KAISAKA Malabon Daycare. This funding has supported renovations after a fire and allowed the restoration of services in surrounding communities. The daycare also serves as a platform for reaching out to women in the community and recruiting membership while they continue their education of young minds.

## Samahan, Workers for Peoples' Liberation

- Since 2009 BCGEU's support has significantly empowered SAMAHAN-WPL in organizing efforts withing the shipbuilding industry. WPL successfully organized SAMAHAN among over 16,000 workers and more than 20 contractors and subcontractors at HHICC-Phil Shipyard in Subic, Zambales, Philippines.
- With BCGEU funding were able to help confront poor and hazardous working condition at Hanjin



ARTIST MOVEMENT  
AGAINST WAR



Issue Ortn and Dialogue with Cebu City Local Government



# SYRIA & TURKEY – Heyva Sor Kurdish Red Crescent



- Local humanitarian organization
- Helps Syrian migrants
- Supports international pressure on Turkish governments to stop Turkey from targeting civilians, health facilities and other infrastructure



## Social Enterprise Project



## DARE Network

### Healing & Growth: Integrated Support for Migrant Workers

DARE Network operates three main activities, which include providing awareness of addiction knowledge, home visits to the community, and providing culturally appropriate non-medical treatment.

### Vision Statement

DARE Network is a place where everyone struggling with addiction has access to the support, knowledge, and resources needed to achieve lifelong recovery and lead fulfilling, purposeful lives.

## 2024 - 2025 Impact

### Treatment & Training Program

- A new treatment Centre was expanded
- Trained 5 new addiction workers
- 20 clients completed a 3-month residential treatment program

### Prevention Education & Home Visit

- A total of 3,433 people participated in the education program
- The outreach team regularly conducts home visits in native languages where migrant workers live and learn.
- Visited a total of 92 houses.

**Green Recovery:** Planting of over 200 moringa trees, contributing to food security and environmental benefits

**Organic Farm for Addiction Recovery:** Gardening serves as both a healing tool and an opportunity to share skills and rebuild their lives in a holistic, sustainable way.

**Empowerment:** Skills in cultivating, harvesting, and processing Moringa into super-nutritious products, cooperative ownership, and access to Moringa's health benefits.



## Thailand Burma – BLSO

### Thailand Burma – BLSO

- Works for the rights of Burmese migrant workers and their families
- Programs for advocacy and training on worker rights

# UGANDA – Stephen Lewis Foundation

- BCGEU partnership fueled the Grandmothers Consortium which brings together grandmothers in Uganda to promote their rights and influence policy.
- BCGEU partnership fueled the Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse which works to address gender- based violence in Eswatini, which is a root cause of HIV transmission.
- With new US administration funding for aid has been cut. The impact will be 2.9 million children and adults will die by 2030.
- Clinics have lost funding. Many LGBTQ partners run clinics. With changes from the US if a gay or trans person goes to a regular health centre they may not get care and may face discrimination.
- Other countries also reduced aid budgets as they needed to increase their military funding.



# ZAMBIA – Videa

- With BCGEU support, helped young people in Zambia - especially those systemically excluded – step into leadership, access education, and organize for justice.
- Youth led conferences reached over 1300 rural and urban youth, connecting them across provinces and continents to share strategies on climate, labor rights, education, mental health and gender justice.





## WHY OUR CONTRIBUTIONS MATTER

- Provides opportunity to improve working conditions
- Provides resources to help workers organize and get representation
- Funding helps others come together to fight for human rights where there are abuses
- Saves lives

# HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY?

- ∞ Keep informed on the issues – Labour Start
- ∞ Talk to members – listen to the information they provide on issues they see
- ∞ Let others know we can speak at meetings to stimulate local interest – presentations to components, labour councils.
- ∞ Ask your component to support a partner – ex. Component 3
- ∞ There is lots of “clicktivism”
- ∞ Give thought to the importance of staying connected to social justice matters
- ∞ International Solidarity

