

Members' Report 2018

STEELWORKERS *Humanity Fund*



Photo: Bobby Marie

Washing in the river just outside the coal mine in Tete, Mozambique

July 2019

Your Solidarity Brings Change Across the World

Building a better world where human and labour rights are respected isn't easy. We live in a global context where simple truths are often obscured and real solutions to poverty and inequality are hard to imagine and harder to achieve. The fight for rights, equality and a healthy planet is about building power for millions of ordinary people to counterbalance the power of global corporations. That takes time, resources, organi-

zation and the active involvement of committed activists.

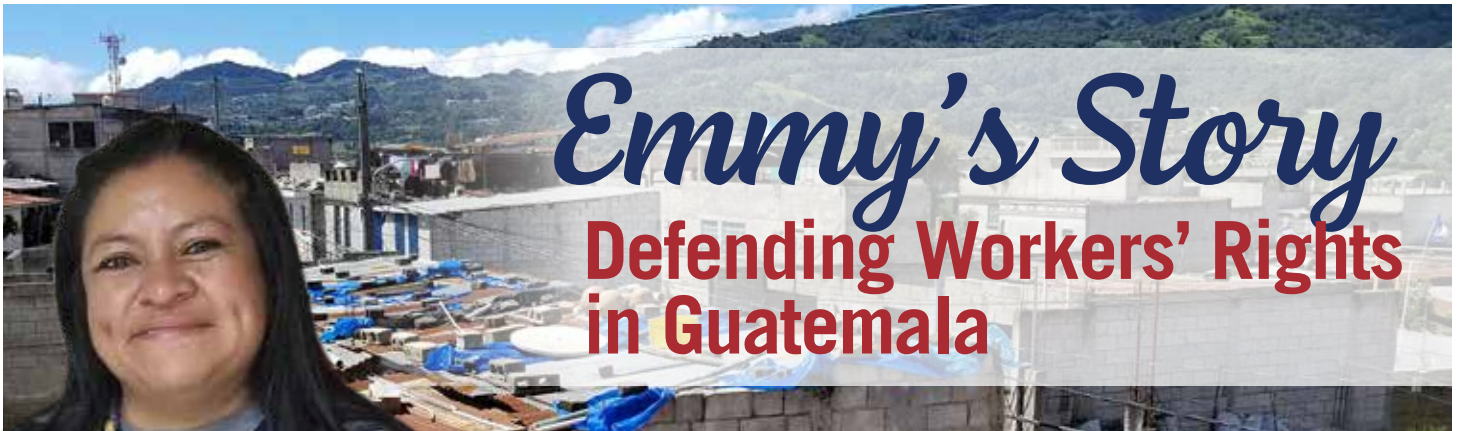
The Steelworkers Humanity Fund is a tool for solidarity through which Steelworkers members can support people to make change happen. Your contributions mean we can provide resources to organizations across the world so they can educate, advocate and organize on their own behalf to improve the lives of those in their communities. In this report you will see some of

the ways your solidarity is building power at the grassroots. ■



Emmy's Story

Defending Workers' Rights in Guatemala



Emmy Meza Talento

Photos: Laura Ramirez

When Emmy Meza Talento was approached by her co-workers to form a union, she had no idea what it would entail. But the 33-year-old municipal police officer in Guatemala knew it was critical that they unionize.

The Municipality of Villa Canales had consistently violated its employees' rights, making them work months at a time without pay while inflicting frequent abuse. Emmy would soon realize the difficulties of being a union activist in the Central American country.

Following a year of threats and discrimination by their employer, Emmy and her colleagues successfully formed the Villa Canales Municipal Workers Union, in affiliation with the Food, Agro-Industry, Services and Allied Workers Federation (FESTRAS). Shortly afterwards, Emmy was run over by a car while directing traffic. The police investigation showed that the nephew of the mayor was behind the accident that sent Emmy to hospital. Fortunately, her injuries were not serious and the incident only motivated her to keep fighting.

A year after forming the union, Emmy was illegally dismissed. During this time the FESTRAS leadership invited her to participate in a 10-month Women's

Empowerment Course. The course transformed her into an outspoken and confident union activist. Following a long struggle, the municipality finally reinstated Emmy and Domingo Nach, the union's General Secretary who had also been illegally fired. A few days later, Domingo was found dead. It is still unclear who killed him but many suspect the murder was linked to his union activism.

Nothing has stopped Emmy since then. Following Domingo's example, she ran for General Secretary of her union – and won. She continued her training, participating in gender empowerment, leadership and organizing workshops. Today she plays an important role within FESTRAS by encouraging other activists to fight for their rights as workers and as women. In Emmy's words, "the union movement motivates me to continue fighting. I love being able to improve the lives of women and workers. There is so much to do and to learn to better defend our rights."

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund supports the work of FESTRAS through training programs on labour rights, collective bargaining, conflict management and gender issues, contributing to the development and empowerment of union leaders like Emmy in Guatemala. ■

After receiving a warm welcome by about 70 women in colourful saris, a Steelworkers Humanity Fund delegation is led into the community centre, a small building with concrete walls located near the entrance to the village of Sadangi.

Located in India's eastern state of Odisha, the villagers of Sadangi speak their own dialect. It is one of the areas covered by our union partner OKKS (Orissa Kendupatra Karmachari Sangha), which runs a forestry project. But the scarce vegetation around the village – mostly shrubs and small trees – leaves one wondering about the type of forestry industry that exists here, as well as the role of the local union.

Manoj Sahoo is the local mobilizer for OKKS. He explains that unions in India play a very different role than in Canada, given that there is often no formal employer to deal with. In recent years, Indian unions have been able to increase their membership by integrating workers from the informal sector.

In this part of Odisha, OKKS has been working hard to organize people who make a living by collecting a forest product called kendhu leaves, used in the creation of handmade cigarettes. Virtually all of them are women, working on a seasonal basis in very difficult conditions for the equivalent of \$100 CDN per year. This is no coincidence; the better paying jobs in this industry are all occupied by men.

With the Humanity Fund's support, Manoj travels around the region to accompany thousands of kendhu leaf gatherers. As a man, he often witnesses the double standard faced by the women who raise their voices when the product of their

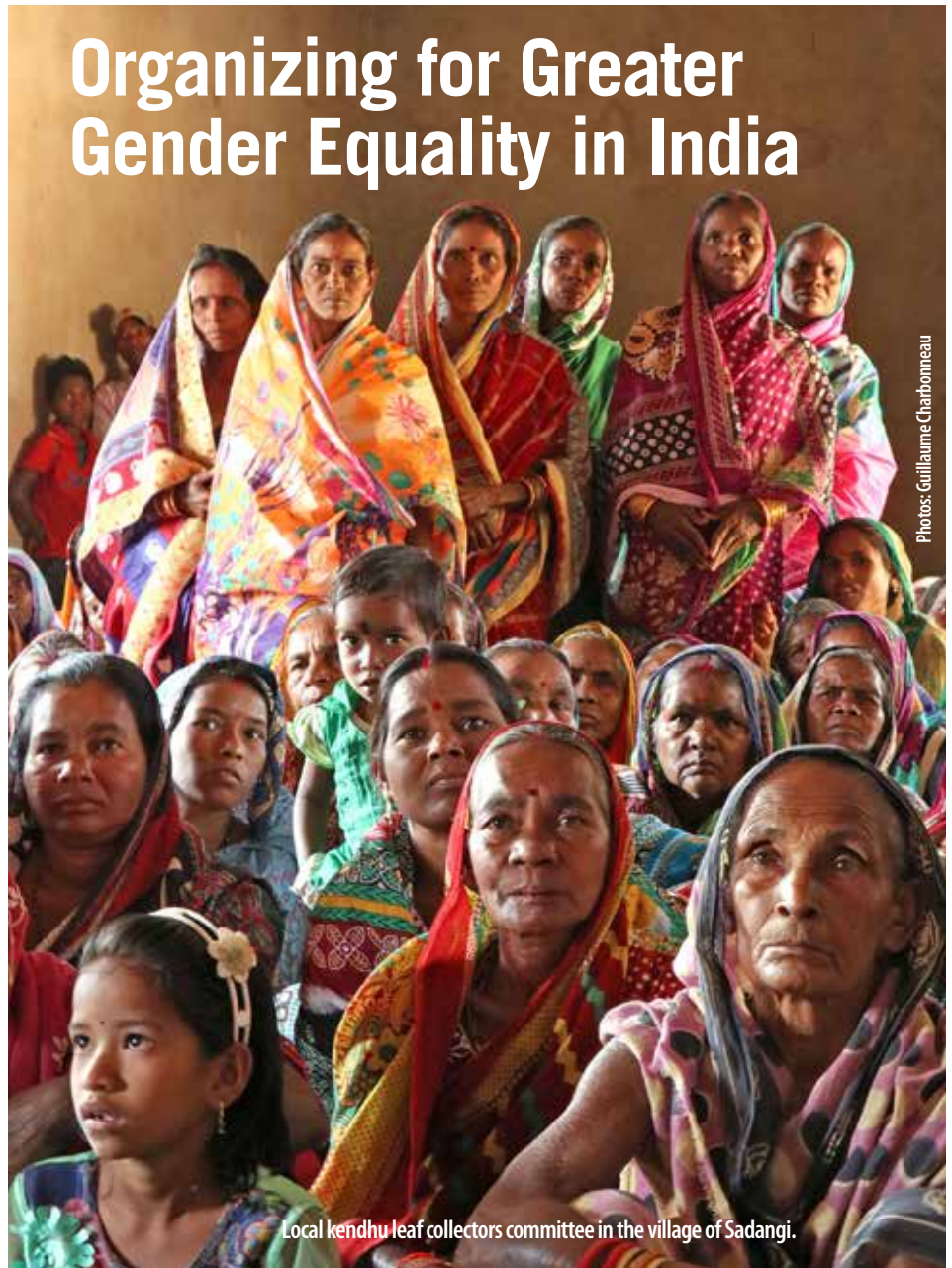


Manoj Sahoo (right)

hard labour is not being paid its just price by the government-appointed buyers of the leaves – all of whom are men.

In this rural context marked by strongly defined gender roles, Manoj must be all the more attentive to ensure the union's actions (mediation, advocacy, administrative assistance to access welfare programs, etc.) contribute to empowering women members to defend their own rights. One example of the union's efforts is the training of kendhu leaf committee members who can represent their fellow workers' interests more effectively. ■

Organizing for Greater Gender Equality in India



Photos: Guillaume Charbonneau

Local kendhu leaf collectors committee in the village of Sadangi.



Photos: Bobby Marie

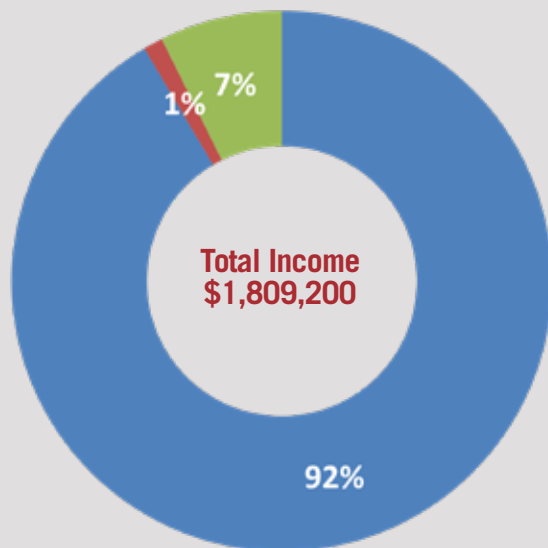
Community activists preparing to interview residents on health impacts of coal mining

Documenting the Health Toll of Coal Mining in Mozambique

For many years, people in the region of Tete, Mozambique, have complained about a variety of health problems linked to the coal mining activities of global giants Vale, Rio Tinto and others. When it comes to multinational corporations, staff from the Steelworkers Humanity Fund’s partner organization Bench Marks know from experience that complaining isn’t enough. They know that mining companies and governments do not fix problems on the basis of individual complaints, especially when those affected are poor people.

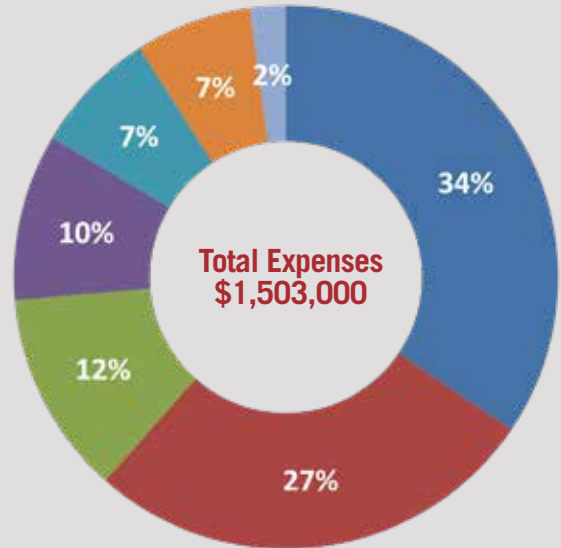
In order to collect strong evidence for their case, Bench Marks has taught local activists the importance of going into communities to systematically document and record the symptoms of affected people. To help them in their task, they have enlisted the help of Paloma Mariphi, a medical doctor who brings expertise and credibility on the impact of coal dust on human health. Still in process, the project’s goal is to compel companies to address the health issues by giving a voice to communities affected by coal mining operations. ■

Where our money comes from



- Steelworkers member contributions
- Local Union donations and other
- Corporate accountability program

Where our money goes



- Canadian and international projects
- Project support and development
- Food banks and other charitable organizations
- Administration
- Education and monitoring
- Corporate accountability program
- Emergency relief

Note: Spending in 2018 was less than expected due to delays in project payments and low relief contributions. As a result, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund entered 2019 in a stronger financial position.

Steelworkers Step Up to Support our Communities

Steelworkers make good neighbours. This was proven once again in 2018 when the Steelworkers Humanity Fund donated a total of \$188,330 to 112 food banks across Canada as part of its annual holiday food drive. From Masset, B.C., to Hawkesbury, Ont., and Bécancourt, Que., Steelworkers are always there to answer the call when it comes to helping their communities. ■



Colombia: the Ongoing Fight Against Impunity

The signing of the Peace Accords brought much hope to Colombians such as Doña Elvira, who witnessed first-hand the murder of her husband by paramilitary forces after he was falsely accused of being a member of a guerilla group.

At the beginning of the 2000s, in Colombia's El Cesar region, such an accusation was a very convenient excuse for companies to take over land for their own use, and Doña Elvira's story unfortunately sounds all too familiar for many survivors. Now in her sixties, she is determined to seek justice for what happened.

As part of a 250-people strong movement of survivors like herself, Doña Elvira was able to muster the courage she needed to face this unfinished battle, by attending individual and group counselling sessions supported by the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

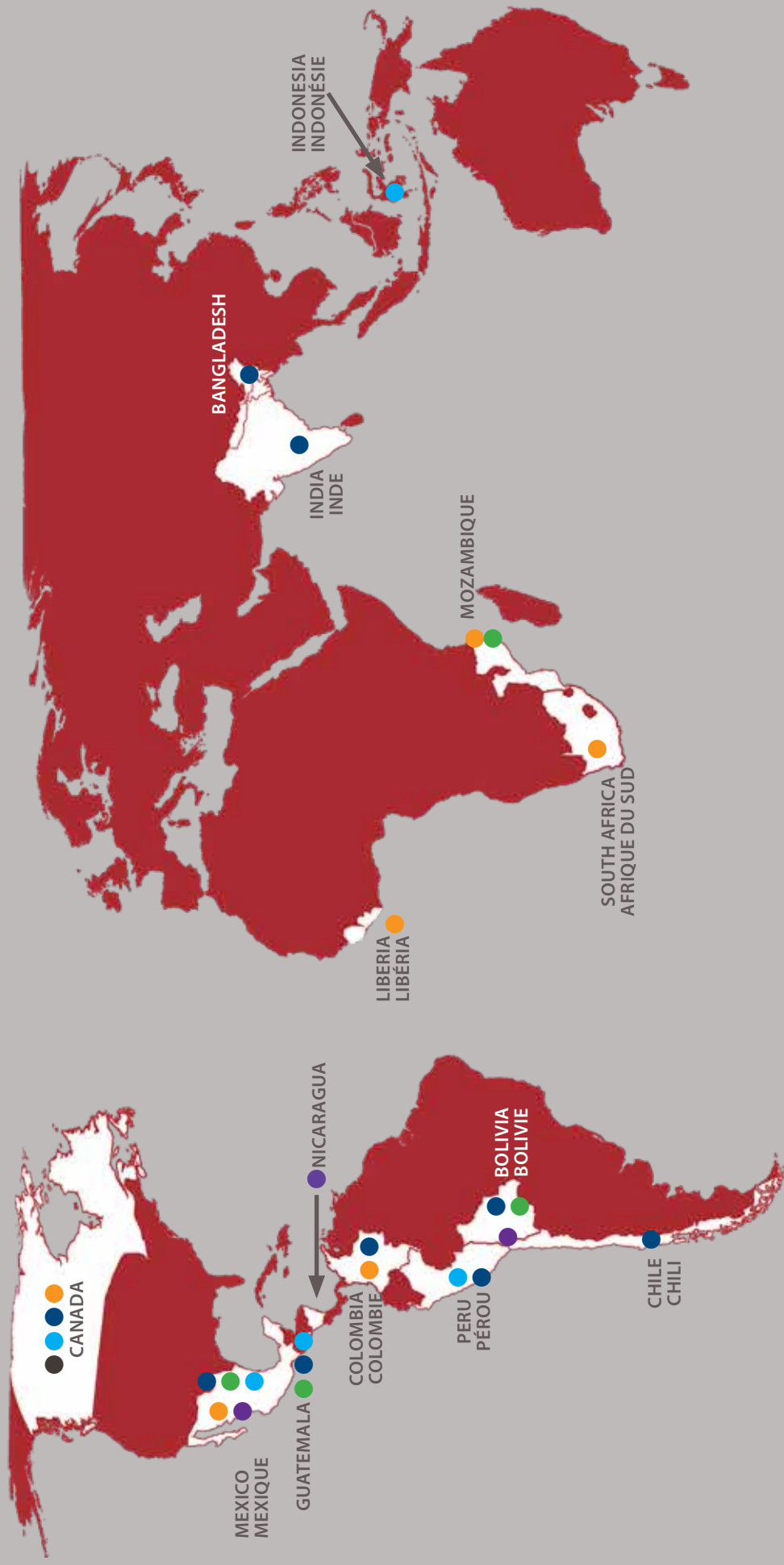


One might ask, after all these years, what keeps her going? Her answer: "So that no one else has to go through what my family went through." ■

Supporting Indigenous Rights in Canada

For the past several years, members of the Innu community of Uashat Mani-Utenam, in Quebec's Côte-Nord region, have been hard at work on a project seeking to recover traditions and ancestral know-how. Like other Indigenous nations, culture and relationship with the land are at the heart of the Innu identity. Kathleen André created the Atelier Innu-Natukuna project with the objective of undoing damages caused by residential schools. In 2018, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund's support allowed for the construction of a building entirely dedicated to training activities, including courses on the Innu language, medicinal plants and the tanning of caribou hides. ■





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

Legend | Légende

● Building Women's Equality
 Renforcer l'égalité des femmes

● Sustainable Development and Environment
 Développement durable et environnement

● Upholding Labour Rights
 Faire respecter les droits des travailleuses et travailleurs

● Promoting Human Rights
 Promouvoir les droits de la personne

● Emergency Relief
 Secours d'urgence

● Fighting Poverty in Canada
 Lutte contre la pauvreté au Canada

Our Partners | Nos partenaires

- AAAJC - Bench Marks Foundation, Mozambique / Fondation Bench Marks, Mozambique
- ASDENA - *Nuevo Amanecer* Health and Development Association, Guatemala / Association pour la santé et le développement *Nuevo Amanecer*, Guatemala
- Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity / Centre de solidarité ouvrière du Bangladesh
- Camp for Peace, Liberia / Camp pour la paix, Libéria
- CNCA - Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability / RCRC - Réseau canadien sur la reddition de compte des entreprises
- CEPROMIN - Bolivian Centre for the Promotion of Mining / Centre pour l'avancement du secteur minier de la Bolivie
- Common Frontiers, Canada
- Community Food Centres Canada / Centres communautaires d'alimentation du Canada
- *Corporación Trabajadores por la Tierra, Colombia* / *Corporación Trabajadores por la Tierra*, Colombie
- CTF - Chilean Forestry Workers Confederation / Confédération chilienne des travailleuses et travailleurs forestiers
- DESMI - Social and Economic Development for Indigenous Mexicans, Chiapas / Développement économique et social des Autochtones mexicains, Chiapas
- FAT - Authentic Workers Front, Mexico / Front authentique des travailleurs, Mexique

Emergency Relief | Secours d'urgence

- Floods in Grand Forks, BC – \$5,000 / Inondations à Grand Forks, C.-B. - 5 000\$
- Eruption of Fuego Volcano in Guatemala – \$10,000 / Éruption du Volcan Fuego, Guatemala - 10 000\$
- Tsunami on the Island of Sulawesi, Indonesia – \$10,000 / Tsunami sur l'île de Sulawesi, Indonésie – 10 000\$

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



CANADA'S COALITION TO END GLOBAL POVERTY
ENSEMBLE POUR ÉLIMINER LA PAUVRETÉ DANS LE MONDE

- FESIMINI - Nicaragua Miners' Federation / Fédération des syndicats des travailleurs et travailleuses des mines et connexes du Nicaragua
- FESTRAS - Federation of Food, Agricultural and Related Workers, Guatemala / Fédération des syndicats des travailleurs et travailleuses de l'alimentation, de l'agriculture et des secteurs connexes, Guatemala
- FNITMMSP – National Federation of Workers, Miners and Steelworkers of Peru / Fédération syndicale des travailleurs et travailleuses, métallurgistes et mineurs péruviens
- Housing Assembly, Cape Town, South Africa / Assemblée du logement, Le Cap, Afrique du Sud
- ILRIG - International Labour Research and Information Group, South Africa / Groupe international de recherche et d'information sur le travail, Afrique du Sud
- Jeunes musiciens du monde, Canada
- Maharashtra Building, Construction, Forest and Wood Workers Union, India / Syndicat des travailleurs du bâtiment, de la construction, de la foresterie et du bois du Maharashtra, Inde
- OKKS - *Orissa Kendupatra Karmachari Sangha*, India / *Orissa Kendupatra Karmachari Sangha*, Inde
- ProDesc - Project for Economic, Social and Environment Rights, Mexico / Projet pour les droits économiques, sociaux et environnementaux, Mexique
- Projet Accompagnement Solidarité Colombie, Canada
- Vida Viva Colombia Platform / Viva Vida plateforme Colombie

Partnerships with Indigenous communities in Canada avec des communautés autochtones au Canada

- Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, Ontario / Algonquins de la Première nation de Pikwakanagan, Ontario
- Alter Eden, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- Atelier Innu Natuka, Uashat Mani-Utenam (Sept-Îles), Québec
- NanatuKavut Community Council, Labrador / Conseil communautaire NanatuKavut, Labrador
- KAIROS - Indigenous women and mining / KAIROS – Femmes autochtones et mines