



**The Ontario Employment
Education and Research Centre**

PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

RAISING AWARENESS

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

BUILDING CAPACITY

PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Annual report 2017



WORKERS' ACTION CENTRE

PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

- Our work and leadership had a significant impact, contributing to the successful passing of *Bill 148: Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act* on November 27, 2017 resulting in historic legislative improvements and protections for workers in Ontario. This included raising the minimum wage to \$14, paid sick days, equal pay for equal work and other protections
- Supported workers to understand and enforce their rights through over 25 community workshops, about 50 support clinics and information sessions (benefitting about 700 workers), distributing 8,000 plain language factsheets and booklets, and a telephone hotline responding to over 800 workers
- Supported UNITE HERE Local 75 Food Service Workers at York University and the University of Toronto who won a \$15 minimum wage for all workers and equal benefits for part-time and full-time workers

RAISING AWARENESS

- Over 100 media hits on the issues facing workers in low wage and precarious work
- Promoted workers' rights issues through public speaking, information tables, community events, neighbourhood outreach opportunities, distribution of over 30,000 flyers and backgrounders on decent work, as well as managed a variety of social media tools to inform and engage workers
- Supported the coordination of a platform that facilitated involvement of over 6,000 allies and community members in the movement for decent work in Ontario, provided communication support to local organizers and supported securing written endorsement of Faith Leaders for decent work reforms
- Submission of *Building Decent Jobs from the Ground Up*, a detailed response with Parkdale Community Legal Services (PCLS) to the Special Advisors' Interim Report, *Responding to the Changing Workplaces Review*

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

- Delivered a range of leadership training opportunities for workers directly affected by low wages and precarious work benefiting over 85 members
- Offered a 10-month paid Senior Leader Internship program for 8 workers
- Organized over 20 members' events and organizing meetings to strengthen peer supports and provide a forum for discussion and learning
- 5-part Labour Education Series facilitated in Spanish to support growing Latinx membership
- Supported workers to bring their issues and concerns to the attention of local members of parliament and Ministry of Labour officials

BUILDING CAPACITY

- Provided mentoring to community organizations on community organizing benefitting over 40 frontline staff
- Supported community leaders who organized over 120 local presentations and events to promote awareness of the Changing Workplaces Review – a provincial government review of labour and employment law
- Hosted a two-day provincial strategy meeting of over 150 participants to coordinate efforts to ensure the voices of workers are heard in the Changing Workplaces Review
- Continued the ambitious 10-month training program – Feet on the Ground – to support 28 worker leaders to build capacity to win decent work in their communities; 10 were graduates of the 2016 program who deepened skills and helped to mentor a new cohort of organizers

PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH

- Ensured that workers' perspectives influenced academic research, policy groups, networks and advocacy projects on workers' rights issues, including as an active partner in *Closing the Employment Standards Enforcement Gap* multi-year research project



Caregivers Action Centre

PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

- Organized two free legal clinics and workshops for caregivers to receive legal support and learn about their rights, benefitting over 60 caregivers
- Worked with Coalition for Migrant Workers Rights Canada to successfully repeal exploitative "4 and 4 rule" in immigration law, which required migrant workers to leave Canada after 4 years of cumulative employment and banned them returning for another 4

RAISING AWARENESS

- Raised awareness through media interviews and public presentations on the issues faced by migrant caregivers
- Supported members to make submissions to a review of the *Temporary Foreign Worker Program*, launched a campaign to make changes to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and mapped the implementation of changes to the Caregiver Program
- Actively engaged in the provincial movement for decent work, the *Changing Workplaces Review* and public consultations on *Bill 148: Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act*

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

- Continued to develop the skills and leadership of caregivers to speak out in the media, make public presentations and facilitate workshops
- Three worker leaders participated in the *Feet on the Ground* intensive training program for organizers, with one member later hired as an organizer with Caregivers' Action Centre

BUILDING CAPACITY

- Nurtured participation and leadership of caregivers in advocating for changes to federal and provincial policy and built alliances on a provincial, national and international basis
- Strengthened partnerships with organizations across Canada and internationally
- Supported caregivers to undertake outreach to other caregivers to share rights information and invite them to become involved



PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS

- Supported migrant workers' rights through referrals for case work support and training
- Through ongoing collaboration with other workers' rights organizations, successfully won repeal of "4 and 4 rule", which required migrant workers to leave Canada after 4 years of cumulative employment and banned them returning for another 4

RAISING AWARENESS

- Supported migrant workers, legal clinics and their support organizations to speak out in the media about the impact of reforms to the *Temporary Foreign Workers Program*
- Supported migrant workers to meet with *Employment and Social Development Canada* to advocate for expansion of their rights
- Supported migrant workers to respond to provincial *Changing Workplaces Review* and *Bill 148: Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act*

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

- Facilitated the development of a network for migrant workers to share information and further their civic engagement

BUILDING CAPACITY

- Increased membership of Migrant Workers Alliance for Change to 46 organizations or groups and supported capacity building of members to facilitate migrant worker leadership in their work
- Supported existing migrant worker led organizations to strengthen their relationships with workers and connections with referral resources
- Increased the capacity of some Migrant Workers Alliance for Change member organizations who work with undocumented workers by conducting trainings for migrant workers and service providers, and providing a comprehensive toolkit for workers and service providers

The OEERC would like to thank our Funders for 2017

- **The Atkinson Charitable Foundation**
- **The Catherine Donnelly Foundation**
- **The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation**
- **The Maytree Foundation**
- **Freedonia Foundation**

Thanks to all of our community allies who made our 5th annual Workers' Bowl fundraising event such an incredible success! And, a special thanks to our private donors for their extraordinary personal commitment to furthering workers' rights awareness and supports.

The OEERC's audited financial statements are available upon request.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sheila Wilmot

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Stacey Papernick

Lynn Spink

At the OEERC, we believe that the most effective public education and support happens at the community level. Thus we deliver our programming utilizing the expertise of organizations with a proven record of developing and delivering accessible public education on workplace rights, as well as a commitment to the development of peer networks and community leaders to extend the learning and support.



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