



Building Ontario's Decent Work Movement 2021 Annual Report

Year in Review

During another incredibly challenging year for frontline workers, OEERC and our partner organizations continued to deliver on our mission to **support workers and raise awareness of workplace legislation and issues affecting workers.**

Whether it was supporting worker-led groups through OEERC's platform, building the leadership of workers in low-wage and precarious jobs, or ensuring workers' experience and voices were part of the public conversation—our collective efforts grew the movement for decent work in Ontario and across the country.

Our organizations rose to meet COVID's challenges with creative organizing that respected public health restrictions, before shifting in the summer to small in-person meetings, outreach events, training sessions, picnic meetings, and social events.

As a result, we effectively grew our movement by mobilizing new leaders. Our leadership also increased on a national scale, as we supported several provinces with training on campaigns and grassroots community outreach.

We enter 2022 with a sense of urgency and renewed commitment to supporting workers to achieve more equitable conditions for all. Despite the pandemic's many challenges, we are confident that we will persevere. **We are committed to continue working around any obstacles put in front of us to ensure that workers get the protection they deserve.**



Partner Achievements

The Workers' Action Centre (WAC) is a worker-based organization, committed to improving the lives and working conditions of people in low-wage and unstable employment. OEERC offers WAC administrative support, financial planning, bookkeeping, program development, fundraising, mentorship and training, collaborative workspace, meeting and event space to power their organizing.



Protecting Worker Rights

- **1,125 workers** received support to address a workplace violation or issue by calling WAC's workers' rights phonenumber.
- **1,800 workers** attended 118 *Know Your Rights* workshops.
- **Dozens of new materials** on employment rights and emerging issues during the pandemic were distributed in English, Chinese, Spanish, Tamil, and Bengali.



Raising Awareness

- WAC **supported workers to speak out** publicly about violations of rights or lack of protections in the workplace.
- They earned over **260 unique media hits** in English, Mandarin, Punjabi, Somali, and Tamil documenting their key decent work issue priorities.
- WAC leveraged expanding communications infrastructure and new digital tools to reach and engage a **growing audience of tens of thousands** of decent work supporters.



Developing Leadership and Building Capacity

- WAC held regular meetings for its members to share strategies and strengthen peer support. They supported a provincial network of decent work supporters, including hosting **10 meetings** with over **2,000 RSVPs**.
- Organizers supported **community leaders in the Somali, Tamil, and Punjabi communities in Peel, Etobicoke, and Scarborough** to serve critical roles in gaining ethnic media coverage, hosting outreach meetings and community events, and providing support to workers.
- WAC also collaborated with the OEERC to facilitate the *Feet on the Ground* Leadership Training Program in October 2021. It included **42 participants who speak 10 languages**—including students, construction workers, early childhood educators, cleaners, grocery store clerks, caregivers, farm workers, settlement workers, and factory workers.

Partner Achievements

Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC) is building a member-led organization of migrant farmworkers, care workers, students and more to win worker and immigration justice. OEERC offers MWAC administrative support, organizational development, mentorship and training, collaborative workspace, meeting and event space.



Providing Direct Support and Education

- In 2021, MWAC provided one-on-one support to **1,532 workers**, including 226 migrant care workers, 350 English-speaking farm workers, 426 Spanish-speaking farm workers, and 530 migrant student workers. Organizers offered much-needed information, referrals, and direct aid.
- Over **11,000 migrant workers** attended MWAC online information sessions.



Building Leadership Capacity

- MWAC's membership model focuses on self-organizing. Migrant workers form "Base Groups" of about 10 members each, with two elected coordinators who meet monthly with other coordinators to carry forward members' proposals and facilitate collective decisions. **151 workers were organized** into Base Groups at farms, post-secondary institutions, and online. In 2021, MWAC also created outreach teams, **hiring 35 migrant workers** to do farm visits and outreach in specific neighbourhoods in Peel and Toronto.



Supporting Worker Advocacy

- In a historic first, a special *Temporary Resident to Permanent Resident* program **gave access to permanent residence to 90,000 people**, including workers in low-wage industries. MWAC supported thousands of workers to apply for the program.
- MWAC organizers also coordinated with workers in their support of the creation of a "regularization program" for undocumented people, and for more avenues for permanent residency for migrant students and migrant workers.

Partner Achievements

The **Decent Work and Health Network (DWHN)** is a group of health workers and trainees advocating for better health by addressing working and employment conditions in Ontario. OEERC offers DWHN administrative support, organizational development, financial planning, bookkeeping, fundraising, program development, mentorship, training, staff supervision, work planning support, collaborative workspace, and meeting and event space.



Building Capacity

- DWHN launched online action tools that enabled supporters to send over **11,700 direct messages** to decision makers about the need for effective paid sick days policy.
- They hosted capacity-building trainings, meetings, and actions to support health workers to engage with and support decent work issues.
- They collaborated with partners across the public health, health, and labour sectors to support them in advancing decent work policy from a health perspective.



Advocacy and Thought Leadership

- In partnership with worker-led groups, DWHN **advanced paid sick days policy** that reflected the needs of workers on the ground. They provided important leadership to keep the issue front and centre, contributing to the adoption of temporary paid sick day programs in jurisdictions across the country, and permanent paid sick days federally and in British Columbia.
- They also hosted press conferences to raise awareness of decent work issues at key moments throughout the pandemic, earning over **100 media hits** in print, radio, and TV outlets.



Expanding the Network

- Thanks to its digital mobilization efforts, DWHN increased their network of supporters to over **7,400**. They more than doubled their social media reach on Instagram and Twitter, while increasing by almost a third on Facebook.
- Through the growth of its network of health workers, DWHN advanced a critical perspective that recognized the connection between health outcomes and working conditions, particularly on the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on workers in precarious jobs—including racialized and migrant workers.

Funders

Thank you to our funders in 2021.

- Atkinson Charitable Foundation
- George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation
- Law Foundation of Ontario
- Maytree Foundation
- McConnell Foundation
- United Way Greater Toronto
- WES Mariam Assefa Fund

We would also like to thank those who provided **special funding to support our COVID-19 response:**

- Community Food Centres Canada
- ECHO Foundation
- Toronto Foundation
- United Way Greater Toronto

Thanks to all the community allies who made our 9th 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 support.

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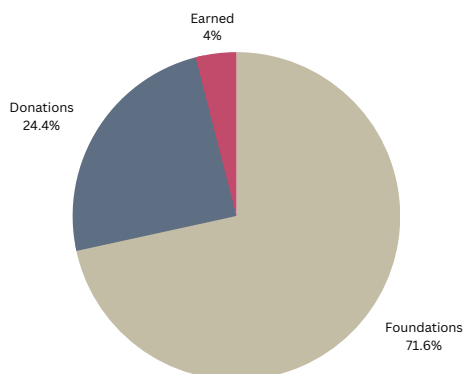
Lynn Spink



Financials

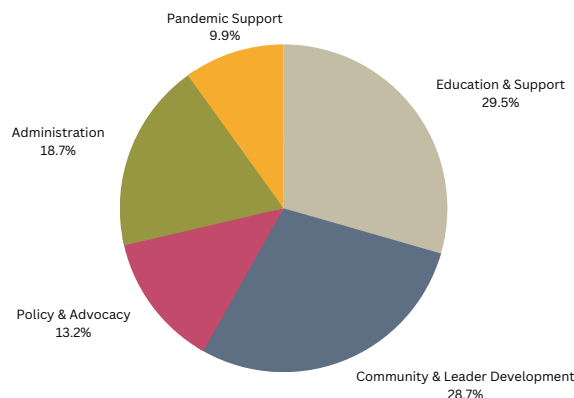
Revenue

1,540,233.59



Expenses

1,398,407.83



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