

PSAC SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND



Standing IN SOLIDARITY



Public Service Alliance of Canada
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada

our mission

inside

- 3 President's Message
- 4 About the Social Justice Fund
- 6 Defend Quality Public Services
- 10 Make Poverty History
- 14 Defend Human Rights and Equity
- 18 Act for Climate Justice
- 22 Challenge Globalization
- 26 Build Capacity
- 30 Take Action
- 34 Work Together for Change

The Labour movement has an important role in fighting the social and economic inequities that impact the lives of workers and people in Canada and around the world. The Social Justice Fund is PSAC's contribution to that struggle.

The right to decent work, the promotion of quality public services and human rights and equity are cornerstones of the PSAC Social Justice Fund. Through education, mobilization and empowerment, the PSAC Social Justice Fund works to advance the role of our members in building stronger communities, a better country, and a more just and humane world.

AT THE BARGAINING TABLE

The Social Justice Fund remains a priority demand in all of our sets of bargaining. To date we have achieved the SJF with over 91 bargaining units. From coast to coast to coast, these bargaining units range from hamlet councils and housing authorities in the North to a national employer like Canada Post. Every contribution is valued.

PSAC Social Justice Fund

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PHOTOS P3 Susan Duncan / P5 Joshua Berson / P9 FTQ / P10 Canada Without Poverty / P11 Women's Centre / P12 Nunavut Literacy Council & Maison Missinak / P13 Liz Marshall / P14 Joshua Berson / P15 WAC & IWC / P17 Sandra Cuffe / P18 Death of Evidence / P19 GEN / P20 APVVU / P21 Christ Potyock / P22 Friends of the Earth / P23 PSI / P24 James Rodriguez / P26 WAC / P27 Fuad Chowdhury / P28 Cepromin & CNYC / P29 Kairos / P30 Centre des femmes / P31 Breakfast for Learning / P32 EIA / P33 Joshua Berson / P34 IPSMO / P35 PSF

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president's message



Together in struggle

Our union established the Social Justice Fund in 2003 as a way to extend our support to communities across Canada and beyond our borders, in their struggle for justice. Since then we have achieved a great deal, but there is much more to be done.

Defending workers' right to social justice requires us to link our struggles. Our ability to defend our jobs and public services here in Canada depends to a large extent on the success of our brothers and sisters in fighting for the same in countries around the world and vice versa.

We only need to look at the federal government's austerity agenda to see how pensions are being gutted and essential services are being cut. Draconian legislation is being passed to weaken the power of unions and delegitimize any form of opposition by civil society.

These same measures are muzzling public sector workers from Greece to Australia, from Colombia to Mexico, from the United States to Canada. Democracy is being attacked while workers everywhere are facing right-to-work legislation and the criminalization of dissent.

Now more than ever, we are facing the scenario embodied in our founding motto: "Because globalization knows no bounds, neither can our union solidarity."

Robyn Benson
National President of PSAC and Chair, Social Justice Fund Board

"Because globalization knows no bounds, neither can our union solidarity."

about the Social Justice Fund



Making communities stronger

Through education, mobilization and empowerment, the SJF helps to advance the role of our members to build stronger communities and to create a more just and humane world. Created in 2003, the SJF fights for the elimination of poverty and social injustice through five priority areas:

- Humanitarian relief in Canada and around the world;
- Anti-poverty initiatives in Canada;
- International Labour Development;
- Worker-to-Worker Exchanges;
- Worker Education in Canada and around the world.

Several important goals guide our work. These include: an emphasis on the defense of quality public services around the globe; the defense of human and labour rights and greater attention to climate change and climate justice.

PSAC members join the International Women's Day March in Guatemala City, 2015.

The SJF is concerned about the impact of austerity programs on women and equity groups, and the rights of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and around the world.

“The Social Justice Fund helped open my eyes, helped to educate me about what’s going on, helped draw me forward to where I can make a difference. Because at the end of the day, we can make a difference.”

**Matt Arsenault,
CEIU Local 531**

AN EMERGING NEW MOVEMENT

Meeting the challenge

Today we see austerity measures widening the gap between rich and poor, corporate rights trumping human rights, and trade deals privatizing public services and grabbing our natural resources. Governments and international bodies have lost their political will and capacity to address these global challenges.

However, we are also seeing the labour movement and civil society working together as never before in a new social movement committed to ending unemployment, hunger, inequality, climate change and the loss of democratic space. Together, they are creating new solutions for eradicating poverty and creating a new world order based on justice and equality.

Through the Social Justice Fund , the PSAC continues to respond to this call for fundamental social change, working side-by-side with members, regions and locals, and with sister unions, and civil society organizations who are defending decent work, quality public services, and environmental justice for the generations to come. This task involves affirmative action around gender, racial equality and access for those with disabilities. It entails struggling to protect safe food and clean water, and the creation of strong and vital links between women, Aboriginal members and equity-seeking groups in the North and the South.

Frontlines visit to Colombia, 2013.



defend quality public services



Putting people first

The defense of public services has been an important aspect of SJF programs in Canada and the Global South. But today, we are seeing these services eroded, and less people gaining access to them. We see governments callously shrugging-off their role in delivering these services, and telling citizens they can pay for them privately, or do without.

Canada's participation in free trade and investment agreements has been a major contributor to reduced services, job losses, business closures, and the movement of production to other parts of the world.

But, are we not entitled to quality public healthcare and a clean public water supply? Why should we pay for services that used to be provided by the government? Why are our tax dollars not being used to provide quality public services?

Today more than ever, workers and their allies engaged in the vital struggle to protect public services in Canada and around the world urgently need our solidarity.

Quality public services mean that everyone regardless of their economic status, can access the same essential services.

PEOPLE PLACED AT RISK

We are all affected

Daily we see the results of the government's attack on public sector workers and their communities.

The growing income gap in Canada, cutbacks to quality public services and the erosion of income security has led the SJF to expand its anti-poverty program in Canada. The program addresses the impact of cuts in services, social security and affordable housing. Over half of the projects address Aboriginal poverty and women. Others are specifically oriented to the rights of racialized communities, including projects that aim to improve wages and working conditions for precarious work. Other projects address the issue of access for people with disabilities and the defense of the rights of LGBT persons.

Meanwhile, corporate taxes are diminishing. In the 1960s the federal corporate tax rate was 40%. By 2012 it had dropped to just 15%. The estimated cost of cutting corporate taxes for 2011-2014 is estimated to be \$11.5 billion – money that should be invested in Canadians' health and well-being, including pharmacare, seniors care, post-secondary education, a national early childhood education plan, and job creation.

Corporate taxes could be a source of revenue for our much-needed public services. If Canada were to tax at the level of the EU15 countries, we could raise almost \$160 billion more each year in revenue.



defend quality public services

“These workers are not only the victims of a virus ... They are victims of a non-inclusive and insecure system, where international financial institutions have imposed unsustainable development programmes based on health privatisation, to the sole benefit of foreign corporations. They are victims of a careless international community that has allowed such conditions of exploitation and poverty to flourish.”

Rosa Pavanelli, PSI General



AN UNSUSTAINABLE CRUMBLING SYSTEM

Ebola workers victim of privatization

Over 500 public health care workers have died on the job attempting to contain the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

The outbreak falls on the heels of decades of neoliberal policies which have led to crumbling health infrastructure and an exodus of medical personnel to the more lucrative private health sector.

The SJF answered the call from Public Services International (PSI) to provide emergency support to frontline workers who face abysmal working conditions, receive irregular wages, lack training and equipment, and have no compensation if they become ill or die. The SJF is further committed to long-term support to West African health workers' unions in their fight to restore the public health system and gain bargaining rights for frontline health workers.

“ Too many critical elements of the health system have been outsourced. You cannot outsource disease control.”

Ayuba Wabba, Nigerian Medical and Health Workers Union.



FOUNDATION OF A JUST SOCIETY

Rebuilding Haiti's public sector

Our Haiti Solidarity Fund is helping rebuild Haiti's public services, and strengthen the emergence of a democratic civil society.

As a result of the 2010 earthquake, government buildings were reduced to rubble and thousands of public sector workers were left jobless. PSAC members, locals and components raised \$227,000 for short term emergency and long term reconstruction.

The SJF extended solidarity to Haiti's Confederation of Public and Private Sector Workers (CTSP) representing workers in education, utilities, maternal and social benefits, archives and municipal workers.

The SJF partnered with CUPE, the Federation of Nurses in Quebec (FIQ) and Public Services International to build new offices for the CTSP to provide a space for training and capacity building for a vast number of unions and community organizations.

New educational tools and resources are also being developed to strengthen collective bargaining and organizing in the public sector. At the same time, the CTSP is launching a campaign to protect public services and prevent the corporate take-over of the state-run electrical company.

Over the next 3 years, the SJF will be accompanying the CTSP in its goal to strengthen unions in the health, education and energy sectors in Haiti's northern and southern regions.

In 2014, the CTSP, the Nurses Union and the FTQ launched a decent work initiative to strengthen the participation of workers from the informal sector.



The CTSP offices have become a needed gathering place for the social movement

make poverty history

“Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.”

Nelson Mandela



Spiraling gap has profound implications

Exploding income inequality poses a grave threat to progress around the world. According to OXFAM, by next year 1% of the world’s population will own more wealth than the other 99%. In Canada, the richest 1% now own one-quarter of the country’s wealth. Meanwhile, 5 million Canadians are left in poverty. On average, 15% of all Canadian children, and 40 - 50% of Aboriginal children, live in poverty.

Corporate tax breaks, government austerity measures, cutbacks in social programs and public services, unemployment – are eroding our capacity as a society to treat everyone as equals, to be fair and inclusive. The impact of this spiraling gap is felt most keenly by those who are already marginalized and vulnerable: women, youth, racialized persons, Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, the elderly, persons with disabilities, LGBT and others. Left unchecked, this burgeoning inequality will only deepen poverty and discrimination.

Building a Poverty Reduction Strategy

The SJF joins trade unionists, community leaders, social justice groups and those affected by poverty to develop strategies together to eliminate poverty. As a supporter of Canada Without Poverty and Dignity for All, we are helping to develop a national poverty reduction strategy giving low-income people greater dignity and control. The SJF contributes to the New Brunswick Common Front for Social Justice, Alternatives North, NWT, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition and Mackillop Centre, PEI working to create solutions at the provincial and territorial levels.



“Chew on this!” campaign calling for a Federal Anti-Poverty Plan.



Partnering to fight poverty

SJF solidarity extends from the Labrador Friendship Centre to a breakfast program in the NWT, to the campaign for a livable wage in Ontario:

- **The Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre** in Ottawa reaches those struggling with poverty and substance abuse.
- **The Metro Vancouver Alliance** in the Lower Mainland promotes affordable housing, public transit and quality public services as necessary steps to overcoming poverty.
- **The Regional Committee against Homelessness in Outaouais** CRIO, consists of 26 organizations challenging the social structures that produce homelessness and exclusion.
- **The Associations for the Defense of Social Rights in Lévis and Gatineau** represent low-income families in Quebec campaigning to stop the privatization of municipal services.
- **The Women's Centre of Calgary** serves women dealing with poverty, unemployment and domestic violence. It played an important role during the 2013 South Alberta Floods.
- **The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition** addresses homelessness and the elimination of poverty through awareness, advocacy and action.

The SJF is proud of the growing involvement of our locals and area councils in partnering with a variety of organizations which are addressing poverty, cuts in services and social security, and the need for a living wage.

make poverty history



Solidarity with Aboriginal communities

More than half of the SJF's initiatives in Canada promote the struggles of Aboriginal people to:

End violence against women

The Qimaavik Women's Shelter in Iqaluit, the Missinak Community Centre for Aboriginal women in Quebec, the Dream Catcher project in the Atlantic and the Tse'Koo Huba Yoh transition house in Prince George, BC, accompany Aboriginal women facing violence. In Vancouver's Lower Eastside, the SJF funds legal services for women survivors of violence.

Advance literacy and education

The Nunavut Literacy Council addresses literacy challenges affecting half of Nunavut's working age population. In Saskatoon, the Core Neighbourhood Youth Coop offers essential literacy to Aboriginal youth. The Kekegan Initiative in Barrière Lake promotes a community-based way of life and connection with their land.

Guarantee food sustainability

In Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the PSAC regional women's committee partners with the Labrador Friendship Society to provide meals for families facing difficulties. In Burnt Church, NB, the Environmental and Cultural Society encourages youth involvement in food sustainability. The Winnipeg Area Council supports a nutritional program for aboriginal youth at the Ndinawe Drop-In Centre in Winnipeg.

Nunavut Literacy Council.



Maison Missinak, demanding a federal inquiry into the missing and murdered Aboriginal women, March 8, 2015.



SJF joins call to end HIV/AIDS by 2030

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) is calling on governments to bring an end to the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

While HIV infections have dropped by 38% since 2001, 2.1 million people were newly infected in 2013. Young women and adolescent girls are at disproportionately high risk. 22 million people are unable to access life-saving treatment because of the cost of patented drugs and poor health infrastructure.

The campaign to end HIV/AIDS by 2030 highlights the need to strengthen health systems, to support workplace education and prevention, and to extend benefits for workers affected by HIV to prevent their families from being dragged further into poverty.

Partnering with PSAC Ontario Region, the SJF contributes to the Stephen Lewis Grandmothers Campaign, which highlights the innovative, pioneering approaches of grassroots African organizations responding to the HIV/AIDS crisis.

Siphiwe Hlope at Solidarity March, Swaziland. PHOTO BY LIZ MARSHALL

LEADING THE WAY

Through Ribbons for Humanity, the SJF supports the Inuit women's organization, Pauktuutit, and its sexual health care and prevention programs. Their approach, of addressing health issues within the context of social exclusion, housing shortages, lack of potable water and other social issues in Inuit communities, deserves our support and recognition.

defend human rights and equity



In Colombia, the Women of Triana spoke with PSAC and other union members about how their husbands and sons were murdered to make way for a new road to the port of Buenaventura.

Without human rights and equity, it would be impossible for those living in poverty to empower themselves and overcome their oppression.

Social change starts with justice

The defense of human rights and equity is an integral part of SJF's work to address poverty in Canada and around the world. Without human rights and equity, it would be impossible for those living in poverty to empower themselves, to confront and overcome the social economic and political structures that oppress them.

In Canada, our anti-poverty projects support the rights of women, aboriginal and racialized persons, LGBT and people with disabilities and their access to quality public services. Internationally, we do the same.

Our Worker to Worker programs, such as Breaking the Silence, Education in Action in Guatemala, and Frontlines visits to Colombia provide PSAC members with an opportunity to witness the efforts of unions, aboriginal peoples, and civil society to defend their rights, and to accompany civil society in their quest for social justice.

Examples include the participation of Aboriginal Circle member, Terrilynn Brant in the Ethical Hearings against the Canadian Oil Company, Pacific Rubiales, charged with violating labour, Indigenous and environmental rights in Colombia. Brother Armando Perla, from the Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg joined an observatory mission to Honduras as a way to protect civil society being targeted by the coup government.



Workers' Action Centre demanding a fair wage

Precarious work becoming a way of life

Precarious employment is expanding everywhere. An estimated 40% of people in the Toronto area are experiencing growing insecurity as traditionally stable jobs are converted into short term contracts with few benefits. The same is happening in urban centres across the country.

Migrant workers, now the fastest growing stream of immigration around the globe, comprise a growing segment of people who are precariously employed in short-term jobs, with little access to rights, social security or health benefits. Increasing numbers of women migrant workers live in a state of acute vulnerability.

The SJF supports the Immigrant Workers Centre (IWC) in Montreal and the Workers Action Centre in Toronto that offer resources and programs to increase respect and protection of immigrant or non-status workers. These centres along with ACORN Canada are advocating policies to bring about justice, fair wages, benefits, and the right to organize for these workers.

The problem is that there is nothing short term or temporary about this system. It is here to stay.

SUPPORT TO WORKERS CENTRE

PSAC locals AMURE, MUNACA and AMUSE, representing research, non-academic certified and support employees at McGill University, have organized events in support of the Immigrant Workers Centre.



McGill PSAC locals raised funds for the IWC.

defend human rights and equity



Hundreds of PSAC members make dream catchers and raise funds for the missing women at the 2014 Atlantic convention.

THEY WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN

Honouring murdered and missing women

The Dream Catcher project was born of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre in Halifax to give visibility to the many missing and murdered Aboriginal women. PSAC Atlantic Region and the SJF were invited to provide seed money to help build a 10-foot dream catcher on which one-inch dream catchers would be hung to honour each of the nearly 1,200 murdered and missing Aboriginal women in Canada.

The project was conceived as a way to bring greater attention to the stolen sisters, raise awareness, and engage members of the Aboriginal community, PSAC members and other allies in a process of grieving, reflection and movement building.

“They’re not missing. They’re not like so many misplaced keys, or your wallet, or your sunglasses. These women and girls were stolen.”

Dr. Dawn Harvard, Native Women’s Association of Canada



The sea is vital to the survival of the Garifuna economy and culture



2015 - 2025 UN DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Land grab plunges Garifuna into poverty

The Caribbean coast of Honduras is home to the Garifuna, a people of mixed African and Aboriginal heritage who have shared communal ownership of their territory for the last 200 years

Now, Canadian investors, led by businessman Randy Jorgensen, are involved in a massive land grab of Garifuna territory. Several communities along a stretch of coastline are being forcibly displaced to make way for a cruise ship port, tourist resorts and residential developments for northern snowbirds. “We’ve lost almost 80% of our community’s lands” says a local Garifuna activist. Moreover, the Garifuna are being squeezed on all sides by illegal logging, massive biofuel production, and mining interests moving into their territory.

The illegal appropriation of Garifuna’s ancestral lands by Canadian developers is protected by the investment provisions of the Canada-Honduras Free Trade Agreement. The SJF works with Canadian and Honduran organizations to expose the abuse of Canadian investors, and the brutal attacks perpetrated by the coup government against the Honduran people.

“We must remember that people of African descent ... too often face denial of basic rights.”

UN Secretary-General
Ban Ki-moon



Garifuna protest the building of ‘private cities’ on their land.

act for climate justice



The SJF joined the Union of Environment Workers at the Death of Evidence rally on Parliament Hill, Ottawa.

“We are the last generation that can fight climate change. We have a duty to act.”

UN Secretary-General
Ban Ki-moon

The starkest warning yet

If the international community fails to act on climate change now, the impact on peoples’ livelihood and on the planet will be calamitous. While citizens everywhere are mobilizing, governments are stalling and political leaders are failing to find the courage to sign binding global climate agreements.

At home, the Canadian government has done everything it can to undermine agreements to cap dangerous carbon emissions and prevent water degradation. Instead, it is eviscerating environmental laws and regulations, and cutting the jobs of people who protect the environment and our national parks.

Between 2011 and 2017, the federal government will have cut

- 35.8% from Environment Canada’s budget and the equivalent of 1427 jobs
- 24.4% from Fisheries and Oceans budget and the equivalent of 957 jobs
- 30.9% from the Parks Canada budget and equivalent of 717 jobs

Environmental protection in Canada is further threatened by future trade deals, such as the Canada European Trade Agreement (CETA). This deal would give European corporations access to water and local procurement contracts, to the detriment of local producers and environmental considerations.



One Million Climate Jobs: Unions, environmental and social justice organizations form a common front of civil society groups for the building of a green economy in Canada.

Workers tackle climate change

Workers everywhere are concerned about the devastating impacts of unfettered resource development and the importance of mobilizing for climate justice. Unions are increasingly engaged in working towards a just transition to a green and sustainable economy, one that guarantees equitable access to jobs and resources.

The SJF has facilitated the participation of 15 members in international climate initiatives since 2010. At the Peoples' Conferences on Climate Change in Cochabamba, Durban, Rio and the international caravans on Climate Justice in Mexico, our members networked with counterparts from Canada and around the world.

Thinking outside the box

PowerShift is a youth-led effort to build a movement in Canada for climate and environmental justice. During PowerShift's last conference held in Halifax, the SJF enabled the participation of PSAC members, Jeff Clements and Amir Abouhamzeh working at the University of New Brunswick. Enthusiastic and inspired young participants looked outside the box for answers to climate justice.

"As a climate scientist, I know the dangers and consequences of climate change, and I feel that we scientists have an obligation to speak out about it. Attending PowerShift was a way to learn some novel ways of speaking out and to learn what others are doing to act on the issue of climate change."

Jeff Clements
PSAC Member



PSAC members Sandrine Oka and Adedoyin Odukoya visiting toxic sites in Durban, South Africa.

act for climate justice



CLIMATE SENSITIVE RESOURCES

Land and livelihood under threat

The livelihoods of people in the Global South have always been dependent on climate sensitive resources, such as farming and fishing. However, droughts, floods, rising sea levels and hurricanes due to global warming pose dire risks for agriculture, food and water supplies.

The SJF supports the protection of biodiversity, water, and the ancestral lands of Indigenous peoples threatened by the actions of the extractive industry, biofuel production and the building of mega hydro dams.

Tribal fishers fight privatization in India

Since the 2004 tsunami, the SJF has worked with the Union of Fish Harvesters, Agricultural and Forest Workers in India. These workers and their families have been engaged in a bitter struggle to prevent loss of tribal fishing areas due to the installation of 34 private coal plants. The union has been successful in stopping 4 plants and forcing minimal controls on coal ash disposal. Our solidarity is crucial in strengthening the fisher unions' capacity to protect their environment and negotiate with the State on their constitutional rights

Women workers protest coal plants on tribal lands.

The Social Justice Fund is struggling alongside unions and communities in several countries to prevent millions of acres of arable land being grabbed by private speculators.

challenge globalization



Friends of the Earth rally in Brussels against the dangers of the Free Trade Trojan Horse.

ACHILLES HEEL

Using the Investor State Clause, OceanaGold, a Canadian-Australian mining company is suing El Salvador for \$301 million for not issuing a mining license for a project that threatens to contaminate the Lempa River, which provides water for two thirds of the population. US Lone Pine Energy is using ISDS provisions to sue Quebec for \$250 million because it suspended shale gas mining to conduct an environmental study.

6000 corporate-friendly agreements

The world economy is increasingly dominated by large corporations that span the globe and transfer production to countries that offer weak taxes, low wages and few environmental standards. To ensure unfettered access and protect their assets, they need an international framework.

That framework is provided by over 6000 investment agreements currently in place around the world. Moreover, corporations engage at governmental levels to influence public policy in order to advance their interests. Through lobbying, public-private partnerships and corporate philanthropy, they control a vast network of policy instruments, financial institutions, think tanks, mass media, and UN Agencies.

The Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), a clause embedded in most trade deals, gives corporations the right to sue governments for millions or even billions of dollars if they claim any local or national law or regulatory action is jeopardizing their profits. Claims are heard and determined by a panel of private arbitrators. The proceedings are secret and no appeals are possible.



ULTRA SECRET DEALS

Trade agreements pose new threats

The ultra-secret nature of trade talks has become a challenge for unions around the world. The deals are being carried out in secret because of the cost they have in terms of lost local procurement and job creation.

Citizens' rights are threatened by the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA), the Trans Pacific Partnership and other deals which threaten to further liberalize trade and investment in services. These agreements will increase foreign corporate control over domestic services and public assets, and restrict governments' ability to regulate. This essentially reverses the role of public assets from serving public interest to increasing profits for foreign corporations.

The SJF works with organizations such as Common Frontiers, the Trade Justice Network, the Council of Canadians and the Quebec Network for Continental Integration (RQIC) that provide crucial resources to labour and civil society allies in this struggle.

Public Services International rally.

“It is unacceptable that citizens must rely on leaked documents to find out what laws their governments are negotiating on their behalf.”

Rosa Pavanelli, General Secretary of the Public Services International

challenge globalization



Eleven women, gang raped and forcibly evicted by company guards, seek justice in Canadian courts.

FACES OF RESISTANCE

Communities demand justice

The SJF sits on the Coordinating Committee of the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA) to accompany our counterparts in their struggle for justice. The CNCA is comprised of labour, faith-based and civil society organizations responding to the growing numbers in the Global South, severely impacted by the Canadian extractive industry. It advocates for an ombudsman and federal legislation to allow non-Canadians to bring civil lawsuits before Canadian courts.

Mayan communities file lawsuit in Canada

Members of the Mayan population from El Estor, Guatemala have filed three related lawsuits in Ontario courts against Canadian mining company HudBay Minerals. Angelica Choc is suing HudBay Minerals for the brutal murder of her husband, Adolfo Ich. Women from the community are pursuing justice for the gang-rape of 11 women and the shooting and paralyzing of German Chub – abuses committed by mine company security personnel at HudBay’s former mining project.

In Vancouver, 7 Guatemalan men filed a civil lawsuit against Canadian mining company, Tahoe Resources Inc. for injuries they faced when Tahoe’s security personnel opened fire on them at close range. Tahoe is 40% owned by Goldcorp.

SJF supports justice for those who have been victimized by Canadian mining companies.



Angelica Choc, widow of Adolfo Ich.



March against the privatization of Honduran electrical company.

WORKERS FIGHT BACK

Unions resist corporate agenda

Public sector unions are facing virulent attacks by governments because their bargaining power is seen as an obstacle to corporate expansion. Energy and telecommunication are viewed as being particularly desirable assets for privatization as long as the unions in these sectors can be broken.

In Mexico, the authorities raided the country's biggest Electrical Generation plant to intimidate workers and eliminate 44,000 union jobs. The industry is being deregulated and work is being contracted out to private concessions. After 7 years, these electrical workers continue to resist. They are supported in their struggle by PSAC and 80 other Canadian and American unions and organizations who have lodged a complaint under the NAFTA labour side agreement.

Similar attacks are being directed at Colombian oil, and Honduran telecommunications and electrical sectors that face imminent privatization. The SJF is accompanying these and other public sector workers in the Americas who are resisting privatization, and whose leaders are being harassed, assaulted and even murdered.

Through SJF, PSAC members have participated in many ethical tribunals and human rights delegations to condemn these criminal actions against workers.



Sister Eliane Habib, PSAC member from the NCR, participated in the mission to investigate the killings of public sector workers in the Philippines.

Export Processing Zones are notoriously exploitive of women workers.



Philippine women demand health and safety

In Asia and Latin America, multinationals increasingly harness cheap labour by outsourcing operations. This strategy entails the setting up of export processing zones (EPZ) that operate as enclaves where companies pay cheap wages with no benefits, avoid taxes, environmental controls and safety standards. Union organizing is quickly repressed in the EPZ.

It is estimated that 55 to 66 million people work in such plants in the electronics sector in the Philippines, and the garment industry in Bangladesh, Honduras and northern Mexico. These workers, primarily women, are often victims of sexual harassment and discrimination. They are also subject to reproductive disorders – such as premature birth, birth defects, and infertility.

Workers Assistance Centre

The SJF supports the work of the Workers Assistance Centre (WAC) of the Philippines to educate and organize workers in the EPZ of Cavite and Batangas and defend them against unfair labour practices, state-sponsored repression and anti-labour policies. Since 2013, the SJF has also helped the WAC to provide Occupational Health and Safety Training. This program offers training and seminars on the right to health, the creation of an OHS committee and the monitoring of workplace hazards.



Women learn to create a bodymap.



THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE

“I don’t want to die for fashion”

The Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS) is Bangladesh’s most prominent labour rights organization. It was founded in 2001 by Kalpona Akter and fellow garment workers who sought to change abysmal pay and working conditions. Typically, workers earn just over \$68 per month, approximately 32 cents an hour, the lowest wages in the world for apparel workers. Shifts are 10 -12 hours long, and workers are sometimes forced to work 24 hours straight, with little or no overtime. Verbal and physical abuse is widespread.

Bangladesh is the most dangerous place in the world to be a garment worker. Over the past five years, more than 2,000 workers have been killed in preventable fire and building safety disasters. The collapse of the Rana Plaza building on April 23, 2013 was the deadliest accident in the history of the industry, killing 1,134 and injuring more than 1,500 workers.

SJF brings garment worker to Canada

Due to their work, Sister Akter and other members of the BCWS have been subjected to repression and arbitrary detentions, including the murder of union organizer, Aminul Islam in 2012.

Following the Rana Plaza tragedy, Sister Akter was invited to Canada to meet with PSAC and other unions to discuss ways we could support the workers in Bangladesh. The SJF began funding the BCWS in December 2013. This project has now been expanded by pooling the resources of 4 Canadian unions.



The first anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy.



Kalpona Akter addresses the PSAC



Literacy courses for mining women, Bolivia.

Multiplying literacy efforts

The SJF Literacy programme directly benefits workers and their local communities, and has a real impact in tackling poverty and generating lasting economic development.

In Canada

The Nunavut Literacy Council offers training and materials in Inuktitut throughout a vast region where over half the adults lack literacy.

Skills for Change with the Immigrant Workers Centre in Montreal helps workers acquire information and skills to enhance employment opportunities and understand social policies impacting immigrant workers.

New Directions Speaker's School in Thunder Bay provides training to injured workers, low-income persons and others to develop leadership and confidence and to speak publicly on social justice issues.

The Core Neighbourhood Youth Coop in Saskatoon helps Aboriginal youth develop literacy and job-finding skills at the same time as developing cultural pride.

Internationally

The Legal Clinic to Combat Gender-based Violence in DR Congo provides paralegal training for women victims of violence to pursue justice through the court system.

The **CEPROMIN literacy courses** taught to mining women in Bolivia build on ancestral knowledge of the Quechua and Aymara people, empowering the women to become more active and to speak out for their rights, and that of their people.

"Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other."

Paulo Freire,
Pedagogy of the Oppressed



The Youth Coop enjoys support from members of the Agriculture Union.



Women of Courage and Heirs of Justice.

ELIZA'S STORY

“Eliza was very inspiring. She told us how one night, the military barged into her home and asked for food. Her husband refused. To teach him a lesson, they tied him up, killed her two sons and then raped her. Then they killed her husband. One of her daughters found her, and sought help from Heirs of Justice. Eliza survived and has become a compelling spokesperson now helping other women.”

Danielle Dubuc, Alternate National VP for PSAC and VP for the Workers of Colour on the CLC Council

Women of Courage

The SJF supports women and girls in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where over one million have been victimized by gender-based violence. Women are especially targeted where resource extraction has led to armed conflict.

Thanks to funding from the SJF Literacy Fund and our partner KAIROS, Heirs of Justice offers prevention education and paralegal training to empower women to pursue justice through the country’s dysfunctional court system.

In June 2013, Sister Danielle Dubuc joined a KAIROS-led Women of Courage delegation and witnessed the transformative work being carried out by Heirs of Justice. Upon return, the delegation met with Parliamentarians to discuss actions Canada can take to help build peace and stability in this troubled region. They also expressed concern about foreign mining companies operating in the country – 70% of which are Canadian – which are doing little for local development or to ensure protection of human rights.



Sisters Magali Picard and Huguette Breton cutting the ribbon at the women's centre.

ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY

Lac Mégantic Women's Centre reopens

On July 6, 2013 the terrible train derailment and explosion in Lac-Mégantic left 47 people dead, and a town whose inner core was devastated. Among the victims was PSAC member, Sister Natacha Gaudreault.

Following a visit to Lac-Mégantic, Sister Magali Picard, REVP for Quebec, contacted the SJF to discuss the restoration of the Women's Centre for the region of Granit which had been badly damaged. Located in the heart of the city, the Centre has been an important resource for women for the last 30 years, breaking isolation, encouraging women and promoting women's rights.

Thanks to the community, and the solidarity of SJF and PSAC Quebec, the Centre gradually has re-established its activities, while accompanying women impacted by the tragic events. The SJF continues to support the Centre.



The SJF contributed nearly \$22,000 to replace windows, insulate the roof, and support programming and community outreach to allow the team to respond to its mission. The Centre reopened its doors to the public in October 7, 2014.



The heart and soul of the Social Justice Fund

PSAC members everywhere, from coast to coast to coast, have embraced the opportunity to get involved in social justice issues related to struggles here in Canada, and overseas.

Winter Warm-Up is a joint initiative of the PSAC Labrador Regional Women's Committee and the Labrador Friendship Society to provide hot meals for low income Innu, Inuit and Métis families in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Seeds of Renewal: Esgenoopetitj Community Garden. In Burnt Church, NB, the SJF is supporting a community garden led by PSAC member, Barbara Paul. The garden uses traditional Aboriginal cultivation techniques to introduce food sovereignty, cultural pride and aims to help people break out of a cycle of poverty and violence.

The PSAC Calgary Human Rights Committee organizes member participation in the Global Festival for Human Rights held yearly in Calgary.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the NWT, Breakfast for Learning helps ensure 9,092 students start their day with a nutritious meal. It also supports lunch and snack programs, and provides equipment grants to meet the demands of feeding large groups of children. Breakfast for Learning also ensures that programs have the tools and resources needed to run quality, sustainable programs. The SJF proudly supports this valuable program.



take action



Canadian volunteers and PSAC members work with indigenous communities.

CAFÉ JUSTICIA

The CCDA produces the fairly traded, organically and shade-grown coffee, Café Justicia. It is made available through the SJF office in Ottawa. All proceeds are designated for the improvement of food production, improved access to potable water, the salary of a full-time school teacher and the construction of housing.



Education in Action inspires members since 2006

The Education in Action program inspires PSAC members to get involved in meaningful solidarity with Guatemala. Thanks to the SJF, 27 PSAC members have participated in the program, working with Mayan families who are members of a Guatemalan farmers' cooperative, the Campesino Committee of the Highlands (CCDA). So far, 82 homes, 3 community centres and 3 schools have been built.

Since 1982, the CCDA has defended farmers' economic, social and cultural rights, struggled for equitable land distribution, carried out sustainable agricultural development, and encouraged the economic empowerment of women.

Over the last few years, farmers have faced a food crisis due to global warming which has produced a serious drought and an aggressive blight that has destroyed the coffee harvest throughout Central America. The CCDA has increased organic food production and crop rotation to offset this crisis.



Canadian and Colombian workers on the frontlines

PSAC National Vice-President, Chris Aylward and UNW President, Todd Parsons, participated in the 2013 Frontlines visit to Colombia. During the visit, they and other Canadian unionists met with a wide spectrum of unions who are defending collective bargaining rights for all public sector workers in Colombia. The Canadians shared their experiences of austerity measures and attacks on the public service here. Colombian trade unionists told of nearly 3,000 trade unionists being assassinated in the last 25 years as a result of paramilitary violence and government impunity.

A founding partner of Frontlines in 2004, SJF plays a pivotal role coordinating Frontlines Initiatives. Frontlines provides an opportunity for sister unions in Canada and Colombia to strengthen each other's struggles, to stop the privatization of public services and defend human and labour rights.

Brothers Aylward (left) and Parsons (right) visiting the Nasa Kiwe indigenous community, La Delfina, Colombia.

"My ten days in Colombia were an eye-opener. For me, as a Canadian and a trade unionist, it was sobering to learn of Canada's implication in the oppression and misery of ordinary Colombians. Those face-to-face meetings were an education in themselves. I came back energized and inspired by the raw courage of our Colombian counterparts. If they can join together and stand up in the face of such unimaginable risk – what is stopping us? "

Chris Aylward, Frontlines Tour

work together for change

The empowerment of community members and the struggle for self-determination are central to ending poverty – and to creating a sense of hope.



Barrière Lake First Nation struggle to control traditional land

Algonquins from the impoverished community of Barrière Lake negotiated a groundbreaking trilateral agreement with Canada and Quebec outlining terms for joint management of their traditional territory. Years later, the governments have still refused to honour the agreement, drawing the members of the community into a difficult and protracted legal battle.

A group of community members have started to work together to educate and create a sense of hope to overcome the cycle of poverty and despair which has overshadowed their community. Since 2011, the SJF has supported the Kekegan Initiative to empower community members by providing them with the necessary tools to ensure the continuation of their community-based way of life, their connection to the land and exercise of self-determination.

The activities aim to improve the well-being of the community while generating some income, primarily for the elders and women's groups. Workshops provide knowledge on how to grow and use medicinal plants and how to create traditional arts and crafts. Youth are given the opportunity to learn hunting and food-gathering skills.





Thousands converged at the Peoples Social Forum to build a united front against austerity, privatization and the neo-liberal corporate agenda.

THE PEOPLES' SOCIAL FORUM

An unprecedented social movement

On August 21-24, 2014, the Peoples' Social Forum converged in Ottawa, bringing together thousands of activists. Participants came from social movements across the country which now have protecting quality public services on their agendas.

An assembly on Quality Public Services was held in a room packed with concerned participants. Half were public service workers and members from Quebec and Canadian public sector unions. The other half came from social movements, who shared their experiences on the importance of public services to their communities, the impact of government cuts and privatization, and what they are doing to protect and promote quality public services.

On the last day, delegates gathered to hear the final report with its call to affirm the rights of Temporary Foreign workers, the rights of Mother Earth, accessible child care, the campaign to protect and promote public services, and to halt the erosion of democracy.

THE FINAL DECLARATION

The unified and unprecedented social movement we build is more necessary than ever... to counter the current federal government and the dominant elites' savage attacks on our collective and individual rights, our jobs, our pensions, our public services, our environment, to immigrants, the poor, people of colour and, ultimately, to our future and that of future generations.

Ottawa, Aug. 24, 2014



The Social Justice Fund helps advance the role of PSAC members in building a more just and sustainable world.



www.psac-sjf.org

