



# 2025

Annual  
Report



Unifor  
Social  
Justice  
Fund

## ABOUT THE FUND

# Money bargained at the table, turned into **solidarity** that reaches around the world.

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The Unifor Social Justice Fund (SJF) is a fund that is negotiated at the collective bargaining table by Unifor Locals, from employers. Funds are used to support community groups, charitable organizations, trade unions and workers' organizations – both in Canada and around the world – to strengthen democracy, improve labour and human rights, promote

equitable development, and contribute to poverty reduction and social justice.

The Fund is a registered charity managed by a Board of Directors comprised of Unifor and community leaders and is guided by principles of social unionism and working-class international solidarity.



## GOVERNANCE

# Social Justice Fund Board of Directors

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### CHAIR

Lana Payne

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### SECRETARY-TREASURER

Len Poirier

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### DIRECTOR

Navjeet Sidhu

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### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Sophie Albert

Shinade Alder

Ken Anderson

Hon. Dr. Jean Augustine

Daniel Cloutier

Samia Hashi

Gavin McGarrigle

Jennifer Murray



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

# A world upended

Looking back at 2025, we find a world that has become rapidly upended, both economically and politically.

The international community is still reeling from a series of policy decisions of a new U.S. administration, including the introduction of punishing and unjustified tariffs being applied on Canada and other global economies, threatening jobs and putting workers' livelihoods in many key economic sectors at risk.

This was coupled with an alarming and abrupt announcement of the dissolution of the United States Agency for International Development – or USAID. As Oxfam Canada reports, the shuttering of USAID resulted in a staggering loss of \$37 billion of aid funding in 2025 that would have gone towards supporting a range of critical humanitarian and international development projects – putting millions of lives now at risk.

In response, other wealthy nationals, such as Germany, France, U.K. and Canada, have followed suit, making cuts to their own international aid and development budgets. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), estimates that member countries reduced their overall international aid budgets by 23% in 2025.

These losses highlight the critical role the Unifor Social Justice Fund plays in supporting communities during times of crisis, while also serving as a reminder of the importance of international worker solidarity at a time when the world is increasingly fragmented.

Many of the projects supported by the SJF in 2025 were in direct response to emerging issues in Canada and around the world. With vulnerable

communities coming under attack, including migrants, racialized people and LGBTQ+ communities, we were proud to support the work of Canadian organizations such as EGALE Canada and the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, and international groups such as Equal Legal Aid in Greece and Al Otro Lado in Mexico. The increased targeting and threats to human rights and labour rights activists have led us supporting projects with organizations such as Front-Line Defenders and Peace Brigades International. Finally, our commitment to gender equity and gender justice has allowed us to develop partnerships with a range of organizations supporting women, whether it is domestic workers with the International Domestic Workers' Federation, garment workers with the Clean Clothes Campaign and the Asia Floor Wage Alliance, or supporting the essential right to education for women and girls with Right to Learn Afghanistan.

We remain thankful to Unifor members and contributors who continue to support the Social Justice Fund, at a time when solidarity, cooperation and humanitarianism is needed the most.

In solidarity,

**Lana Payne**

Unifor National President &  
Unifor Social Justice Fund Chair

THE YEAR IN FIGURES

# 2025 by the numbers



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**10**

Canadian projects funded

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**25**

International projects funded

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**30+**

Countries reached

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**251**

Organizations supported

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**\$2.28 million**

in national and international project funding, donations and emergency humanitarian relief support.

# Latin America and the Caribbean

LAWYERS WITHOUT BORDERS / HONDURAS

## Dignifying domestic work



This project aims to empower women domestic workers through legal education, advocacy, and rights awareness. The initiative addresses the systemic discrimination faced by domestic workers – primarily poor women from rural and Indigenous communities – who are currently excluded from essential protections like minimum wage and social security.

The project focuses on building capacity within organizations like the Red de Trabajadoras Domésticas and the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras del Hogar, by

training 65 workers in labour rights and gender-based violence prevention, while equipping a further 12 participants as paralegals to provide direct peer support. Through targeted communication campaigns and strategic advocacy, the initiative seeks to hold the state accountable, ultimately driving legal reforms such as the ratification of ILO Convention 189. This comprehensive approach ensures that these marginalized workers have the tools to claim justice, improve their working conditions and gain greater social recognition.

### DID YOU KNOW

Approximately 87% of domestic workers in Honduras are women. Over 96% of them do not have access to social security benefits and earn only half the average income compared to other category of workers in the country.

## Border rights project



Al Otro Lado's Border Rights Project is a comprehensive initiative serving approximately 15,000 migrants annually in the Mexico-California border region, providing critical legal, humanitarian, and social support to asylum seekers, refugees and deportees facing systemic violence and discrimination.

The project employs a multifaceted approach, offering know-your-rights training, case management and humanitarian aid, including medical accompaniment, childcare and a life-saving water distribution program for those

crossing desert routes. Specialized programming empowers vulnerable groups, such as Black, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ people, while legal advocacy teams work to hold the U.S. and Mexican governments accountable for human rights violations. Ultimately, the project seeks to increase access to essential services for migrants and promote legal protections, ensuring that forcibly displaced individuals are treated with dignity and provided the resources necessary for survival.

### DID YOU KNOW

2025 saw a total of 32 migrant deaths while in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody – the highest in two decades.

## Supporting and protecting trade union activists in Latin America



This three-year initiative with Peace Brigades International (PBI) looks to enhance the protection of threatened trade unionists and labour activists across Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

PBI's work involves providing a protective physical presence to threatened defenders, documenting and communicating their struggles and advocating on their behalf to various entities, including foreign affairs ministries, embassies and the United Nations. The need for this

support is underscored by the high levels of violence against trade unionists and workers in the region.

PBI has long-standing relationships with workers' movements in the target countries. Some of the trade union leaders and representatives they will be working with are from various industries and sectors from the four countries, including food and beverage, pulp and paper workers, fishing workers and journalists

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# 3,900

human rights defenders provided with protective accompaniment in 2025.

### DID YOU KNOW

In Colombia alone, between 2016 and 2025, there were a total of 972 documented killings of human rights defenders.

## Strengthening public transit workers



The Santiago Metro Trade Union Federation (FESIMETRO) is a federative trade union organization that brings together various trade unions representing Santiago Metro workers. This one-year project looks to unite fragmented transport sectors – including bus, metro and taxi workers - into a cohesive national network and seeks to improve working conditions and influence public policy through a unified labour agenda.

Key project activities include hosting a national seminar to prioritize common worker demands

and launching a national campaign to support access to toilets and sanitation for transit workers. The project also focuses on developing a technical catalogue of collective bargaining clauses focused on just transition and care conditions, alongside conducting a qualitative study on public safety from a workers' perspective. By building international links with other transit unions, such as Unifor, FESIMETRO aims to fortify labour rights, promote social dialogue and foster a more representative transit movement throughout Chile.

### DID YOU KNOW

A lack of access to toilets for transit workers can lead to long-term health issues, including urinary tract infections, kidney problems and chronic constipation. Workers may also deliberately avoid drinking water, leading to dehydration and kidney problems.

HEALTH PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL CANADA / DR CONGO

# Capacity building and improving working conditions for health care workers

This two-year project aims to bolster the resilience of frontline health care workers in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, amidst a severe humanitarian crisis caused by armed conflict. This initiative directly supports midwives and nurses who are struggling to provide maternal and neonatal care under increasingly strained conditions.

The project focuses on three essential components: delivering emergency training in obstetric and trauma care for 100 healthcare

providers; providing vital medical equipment, such as delivery and trauma kits to the overburdened HEAL Africa hospital; and advocating for improved labour conditions by partnering with the National Union of Nurses in the Congo and the Society of Congolese Midwives. These efforts seek to strengthen the local healthcare system, enhance occupational safety, improve worker retention and reduce mortality rates among displaced populations.

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# 100

health care providers receiving emergency obstetric and trauma training in Goma.

## DID YOU KNOW

There were 325 incidents of violence recorded against health care workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2025, including at least 32 workers killed and another 41 kidnapped.

## Expanding health care access for underserved communities



### DID YOU KNOW

Across Malawi, roughly 4 million people (22% of the country's population) are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity.

Project Malawi CKY's Orphans (PMCKY) is a dedicated humanitarian initiative focused on alleviating food insecurity and improving health care access in underserved Malawian communities by expanding vital medical services into remote rural regions where residents often face significant barriers to care.

The initiative addresses diverse health needs through mobile clinics, offering essential eye surgeries, cataract treatments and orthodontic care. They prioritize providing preventive health

measures through cancer screenings and community workshops on general wellness. Beyond clinical services, the project actively combats malnutrition through its Feed a Child program and school-based feeding centers, which provide nutritious meals to over 100 children per session. By combining medical support with sustainable nutritional outreach, PMCKY aims to empower vulnerable populations and foster long-term health improvements across Malawi.

## FRONT LINE DEFENDERS / IRELAND

## Supporting human rights defenders at risk



Front Line Defenders (FLD) is a globally recognized organization, working in over 160 countries, dedicated to protecting human rights defenders (HRDs) at risk. This project looks to enhance the mental health and sustainability of human rights defenders facing increased surveillance, trauma and burnout worldwide. Recognizing the immense psychological toll of advocacy work, their Well-Being and Resilience Program provides structured emotional support

to ensure these defenders can continue their vital efforts safely.

The program offers a comprehensive suite of services, including temporary rest and respite breaks, group-based well-being retreats for collective care and personalized consultations with trained psychotherapists. By prioritizing both physical safety and emotional health, FLD continues its legacy of holistic protection for those defending human rights.

**DID YOU KNOW**

A survey of human rights defenders found that nearly 1 in 5 reported symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and had threats made to personal safety by way of physical assault, kidnapping or detention.

## ASIA FLOOR WAGE ALLIANCE

## Building women's power to end gender-based violence and harassment in Asia's garment supply chains



The Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA) is a regional network of trade unions, labour rights organizations and civil society groups dedicated to securing living wages, gender justice and fair working conditions for garment workers across Asia. This one-year project is focused on eradicating systemic abuse across major garment production hubs in South and South East Asia by empowering women workers through specialized leadership training and the expansion of legally binding supply chain agreements with multinational brands.

Building on successful precedents like the Dindigul and Central Java Agreements, the project focuses on strengthening worker-led grievance mechanisms and enhancing the bargaining power of thousands of women. Through capacity-building in negotiation and international advocacy, the AFWA aims to hold corporations accountable and create safer, dignified workplaces. Overall, this work seeks to dismantle structural violence, ensuring that women garment workers can collectively advocate for their rights and achieve long-term security across the region.

**DID YOU KNOW**

Asia leads the world in garment and textile manufacturing, representing 70% of the world's exports.

## Empowering Afghan women and girls through online education



Right to Learn Afghanistan's Darakht-e Danesh Academic Project remains a vital lifeline for Afghan women and girls, providing secure access to education amidst systemic exclusion. This initiative delivers a comprehensive learning environment through a virtual secondary school, a digital library containing over 8,500 resources and professional development courses.

The project employs Afghan female teachers who have been barred from formal employment, ensuring they can continue their essential work while fostering resilience among students. By

offering an enhanced curriculum that leads to accredited diplomas and providing holistic support like mental health resources and family food supplies, the project upholds the fundamental human right to education. Ultimately, this initiative empowers Afghan learners with the skills and agency necessary for their future, ensuring that educational attainment continues despite the severe political and social oppression currently facing women and girls in Afghanistan.

### DID YOU KNOW

Afghanistan is the only country in the world where secondary and post-secondary education is forbidden to women and girls.

## GLOBAL MEDIC

## Wildfire infrastructure support through the provision of fire skids



Global Medic's Fire Skid Project is a vital initiative designed to strengthen emergency response capabilities in remote and underserved regions facing the increasing threat of wildfires. This project will produce 20 portable fire skid units – mobile systems mountable on pickup trucks or trailers – to be deployed to 15 international communities and five Canadian Indigenous communities.

Beyond the provision of essential hardware, the initiative emphasizes community resilience and capacity building by offering comprehensive

training on fire prevention, firefighting techniques and equipment maintenance. By equipping local first responders and volunteers with these critical tools, GlobalMedic aims to significantly reduce response times, thereby containing fires before they cause widespread structural and environmental damage. This project not only enhances local fire suppression but also fosters long-term safety, ensuring that vulnerable communities are better prepared to protect lives and homes in an era of climate-driven wildfire risks.

### DID YOU KNOW

2025 saw the second worst wildfire season in Canadian history, with over 8.3 million hectares burned, and fires impacting nearly every province and territory.

# Caring for caregivers initiative

Women's Shelters Canada's "Caring for Caregivers" initiative, is a national project designed to combat the systemic burnout and high turnover currently facing the shelter workforce and aims to foster professional resilience by reframing burnout as a structural issue rather than an individual challenge.

The initiative focuses on two primary peer-driven strategies: establishing a national Community of Practice on Worker Wellness to share practical solutions for organizational self-care and

launching a mentorship network to connect emerging and senior leaders. By creating these collaborative spaces, the project seeks to reduce professional isolation, build leadership capacity and equip 50-70 staff members with tangible well-being strategies. This initiative will ultimately look to strengthen the broader shelter sector, ensuring that frontline workers are well-supported in their essential work of providing refuge for women and children fleeing violence.

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## 50-70

shelter staff equipped with tangible well-being strategies through the initiative.

### DID YOU KNOW

According to a national survey of Canadian shelter workers, 28% of respondents indicated they thought about quitting their jobs due to high levels of workplace exhaustion and burnout.

## See the Person, Not the Label: A national campaign for trans awareness



Egale Canada's "See the Person, Not the Label" campaign is a national initiative dedicated to combating the rise of anti-trans disinformation and fostering a more inclusive society. The project aims to challenge harmful stereotypes and improve public understanding of trans lives, specifically regarding gender-affirming care and workplace inclusion.

The initiative utilizes a multi-platform strategy, featuring compelling video storytelling, targeted social media outreach and strategic national media engagement to amplify trans voices. A

core component includes the development of a comprehensive new guide, "Navigating the Transition Journey," alongside an expanded digital hub of advocacy tools and educational resources. By providing evidence-based information to counter misinformation, Egale Canada seeks to shift public perceptions and provide meaningful support to trans individuals, their families and allies across the country. This work reflects a strong commitment to systemic equity and 2SLGBTQI+ rights.

### DID YOU KNOW

In a national survey, EGALE found that 72% of Two Spirit, trans and non-binary participants had experienced workplace discrimination.

## Bringing workers together to protect decent jobs and migrant rights



The Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC) launched a two-year project to support migrant workers navigating the severe consequences of recent federal immigration policy changes by addressing the risks of job loss, increased exploitation and economic instability for millions of individuals.

The project centers on building a united front between migrant and non-migrant workers through comprehensive outreach, peer support groups and "Know Your Rights" workshops. By

providing leadership training and collaborating with unions, including Unifor, the initiative strengthens internal capacity to advocate for fair employment conditions. Furthermore, MWAC will lead public awareness campaigns and direct policy advocacy to connect workers with policymakers, striving for systemic reforms at both federal and provincial levels to ensure equal rights, dignity and long-term protection for migrant workers across Canada.

### DID YOU KNOW

In 2025 and 2026, an estimated 2.9 million migrants in Canada are set to lose their immigration status due to federal cuts to temporary residency programs.

## Empowering renters and inspiring action



The Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR) is Canada's largest housing rights nonprofit, providing legal assistance, education and advocacy to enforce housing protections and work toward systemic change to ensure housing is treated as a human right. This initiative addresses the worsening housing crisis across several Ontario regions, including Toronto, Peel, York, Halton and Hamilton, by aiming to equip approximately 3,000 renters, housing advocates and frontline workers with critical legal

knowledge and advocacy tools to assert their rights against unfair evictions and rent increases.

Through accessible resource development, policy recommendations and strategic training sessions, the initiative seeks to bridge gaps in tenant organizing and legal literacy. By ensuring that the lived experiences of tenants inform broader research, CCHR fosters tenant-driven advocacy aimed at systemic reform to ensure all Canadians can access safe, stable and affordable homes.

### DID YOU KNOW

In Toronto, a full-time minimum wage earner would need to spend almost half of their monthly, before tax income, on housing costs to afford a basic studio unit apartment.

## Supporting women and families through ceremony, essential needs and community celebration



The North Point Douglas Women's Centre (NPDWC) is a Winnipeg-based agency dedicated to supporting Indigenous communities by offering frontline services, fostering cultural connections and providing a welcoming environment for women and families in need. This community-focused project is designed to support Indigenous women and families through a holistic approach that integrates cultural healing, practical aid and community celebration.

This initiative focuses on: providing access to traditional ceremonies and Elder-led teachings to foster identity and healing; alleviating daily hardships by supplying essential items like baby formula, diapers and emergency food kits; and nurturing community spirit through the annual Austin Street Festival. By creating a welcoming space for families to connect and celebrate Indigenous art and culture, the NPDWC continues its commitment to frontline support.

### DID YOU KNOW

Winnipeg is home to the largest urban Indigenous population of any city in Canada, according to the most recent available data from Statistics Canada.

UNIFOR NELSON MANDELA HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

# The Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate

In 2025, during Unifor's Constitutional Convention in Vancouver, B.C., the union handed out its highest award, honouring an organization that has demonstrated steadfast commitment to human rights and social justice.

# 235

journalists and media workers killed since the start of the war, in Gaza, according to the International Federation of Journalists.



# \$50,000

awarded from the Social Justice Fund to help replace critical media equipment lost during attacks.

## RECOGNITION

# Reporting under fire



The recipient of the 2025 Nelson Mandela Human Rights Award was the Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate (PJS), in recognition of the ongoing dangers for journalists and media workers covering the war in Gaza.

According to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), 235 journalists and media workers have been killed since the start of the war, with many having also lost their homes, family members, co-workers and friends. With international media outlets being banned by the Israeli government from entering Gaza, these workers have been bravely on the frontlines ensuring that coverage of deteriorating humanitarian condition on the ground for

Palestinian civilians are being shared with the world.

As a union representing media workers, Unifor recognizes the importance of ensuring that journalists can report in safety and that press freedoms are safeguarded against attacks from those in power seeking to silence dissenting voices or cover up human rights abuses.

Accepting the award was the President of the PJS, Nasser Abu Baker, who gave a moving speech to convention delegates on the daily threats and challenges journalists continue to face on the ground and the importance of international solidarity.

*The goal of the award is to honour a unique person or organization that has demonstrated their steadfast commitment to human rights and social justice.*

**UNIFOR SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND**

## HOLIDAY GIVING

# 2025 Holiday Food Bank and Women's Shelter Donations

Each year, during the holiday season, the Unifor Social Justice Fund makes donations to food banks and women's shelters across Canada. In 2025, 74 food banks and 75 women's shelters were supported with cheques presented by Unifor members, Locals, union leadership and staff. We would also like to acknowledge the additional generous contributions from Unifor's Ontario Regional Council and BC Regional Council towards our holiday giving drive.

## \$300,000

donated to Canadian food banks

## \$150,000

donated to Canadian women's shelters





## DONATIONS

# Organizations supported in 2025

Every year, the Social Justice Fund makes donations to support local, provincial, national and international organizations, supporting a range of important social causes and issues. Here are just some of the organizations the SJF supported in 2025.

### ARTS, CULTURE AND MEDIA

- Canada Press Freedom Project
- RadioLabour
- Raging Asian Women
- Sundar Prize Film Festival
- Vancouver Co-op Radio

### CHILDREN & YOUTH

- Big Brothers Big Sisters Guelph
- CRIBS International
- Federation of Canadian Secondary Students
- Fondation du centre de jeunesse de la Montérégie
- Maison Tangente
- Majengo Canada

### EDUCATION

- One Prosper International
- Pakistan Alliance for Girl's Education

### EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

- Action Against Hunger
- All Pakistan Federation of Trade Unions
- Humanitarian Coalition

### FOOD SECURITY

- Second Harvest
- World Central Kitchen

### GENDER JUSTICE

- 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women
- South Asian Women's Collective
- Women's Education Development Society

## HEALTH

- Hope Air
- Niagara Warehouse of Hope

## HOUSING

- Habitat for Humanity
- York South Weston Tenants' Union

## HUMAN RIGHTS

- Acts of Water
- Black Canadian Civil Society Coalition
- Campesino Committee of the Highlands
- Canada - U.S. Border Rights Project
- CoDevelopment Canada
- Horizons of Friendship
- Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network
- Milagro Sala Campaign
- Retorno y Vida
- World BEYOND War

## LABOUR RIGHTS

- Association for the Rights of Household and Farm Workers
- Association pour la Réinsertion des Vendeuses Ambulantes de Côte d'Ivoire
- Justicia 4 Migrant Workers
- National Day Labourer's Organizing Network
- Tanzania Railway Workers Union

## 2SLGBTQIA+

- L'Alliance Internationale francophone pour l'Égalité et les Diversités (EGIDES)
- North Durham Pride
- Spectrum

## WOMEN'S SHELTERS / TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

- Battered Women's Support Services
- Ernestine's Shelter
- La Maison Victor Gadbois
- YWCA Crabtree



Unifor and CN present matching \$100,000 grants to the Canadian Women's Foundation Girls' Fund, Toronto, December 2025.



Unifor  
**Social  
Justice  
Fund**

## Get in touch

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Charitable registration #: 135323756RR0001