

# WORKERS' ACTION CENTRE

## Annual Report

April - December 2019



October 2, 2019: Community Rally outside the Fiera Foods factory

## Fighting for Temp Agency Worker Protections:

### Lives on the Line at Fiera Foods

In September 2019, yet another temporary agency worker was killed on the job at Fiera Foods, a North York industrial bakery. Enrico Miranda was a perma-temp working for five years through the same agency, waiting to be hired directly. At 57, Enrico became the 5th temp worker killed when the machine he was cleaning crushed him.

Only a year earlier we held vigils for another temp worker killed at Upper Crust, an affiliate of Fiera. *Toronto Star* reporter Sara Mojtehdzadeh went undercover at Fiera in 2017, exposing rampant labour law and health and safety violations that temp workers regularly face. The exposé came after 23-year-old Amina Diaby, a temp for less than three weeks, was killed in 2016 when her clothing got caught in a conveyor belt and no one knew how to turn it off.

Year after year, workers were killed at this company. We needed more than another vigil! After speaking with Fiera workers, we joined Jane-Finch Action Against Poverty to organize a community rally

outside the factory. Though the company cancelled shifts without pay to keep workers isolated from our support, hundreds of \$15 & Fairness supporters helped workers successfully recover their pay for that day. Yet Premier Ford was silent on safety for temp workers.

We sent the Premier an open letter urging him to sign legislation already passed by the previous government. Signing Section 83 (4) of the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* would finally make companies financially responsible under workers' compensation for the injuries and deaths of their temp workers. Still, Ford did not respond.

Finally, we had no choice but to occupy the Premier's constituency office on October 16th. Hundreds of people joined the rally outside and kept #OccupyFord trending on social media while, inside Ford's office, 10 community and

labour leaders refused to leave until we'd been heard.

Instead of protecting temp workers, the Premier had 8 people arrested. He refused to enact the law that would save lives. Yet this bold and peaceful protest still inspires workers to come together and continue the fight. We will not give up!

## BREAKING!

### Premier Ford's office occupied indefinitely!

### Join in! Take action!

15andFairness.org

#OccupyFord

October 16, 2019: Occupying Premier Ford's constituency office and spreading the word online

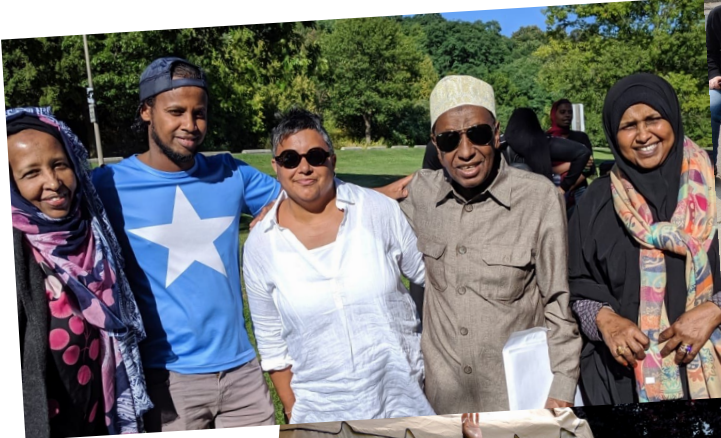


# Bringing Workers Together

**The Workers' Action Centre** is a worker-based organization committed to improving the lives and working conditions of people in low wage and precarious work – through education, support, leadership development, research, policy analysis, advocacy and community action. Our work is guided by these principles: maximum involvement of the people affected, developing leadership among workers, shared learning and action for change.



May 31: One of many actions to Stop the Cuts to Legal Aid



September 14:  
Rexdale Picnic

August 26:  
Regent  
Park  
Picnic



September 15: Brampton Picnic





# and Organizing for Change



May 2: Outreach in Scarborough by WAC members and \$15 & Fairness supporters

November 1: WAC receives a Health & Safety Award from the Toronto and York Region Labour Council



June 16: Migrant Rights Day of Action

**IN SOLIDARITY**

We would like to thank all of our union allies for their generous financial support of the Fight for \$15 & Fairness campaign.

**Special thanks to:**

ETFO / OSSTF / OCUFA

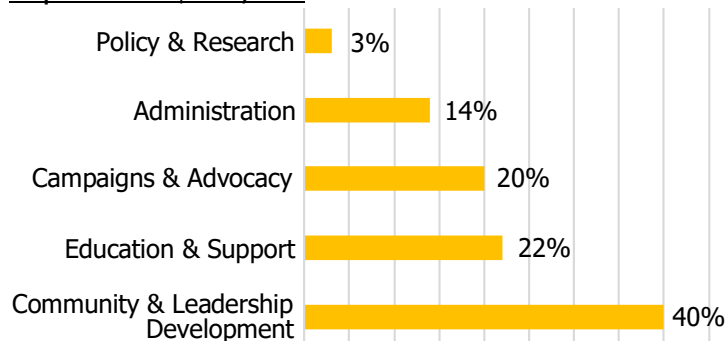
August 10: WAC Members Picnic



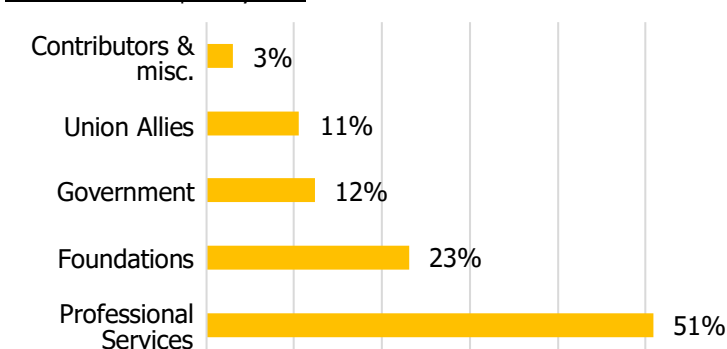


## Financial Summary

Expenses - \$837,447



Revenues - \$796,291



## Building the Decent Work Movement

<b>16</b> Meetings with MPPs or government representatives	<b>34</b> Worker leaders participated in the 2019 Feet on the Ground Training Program
<b>44</b> Community organizations, unions and coalitions as networking partners	<b>64</b> Media moments of which 45 were in ethnic media sources, reaching the Chinese, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish and Tamil speaking communities
<b>139</b> Workshops on employment rights	<b>632</b> Workers supported through our Workers' Rights Information Phoneline
<b>1,705</b> Workers attended a "Know Your Rights" workshop or support clinic	<b>6,000 +</b> Allies and community members informed on decent work issues
<b>70,000 +</b> Flyers and backgrounders distributed on decent work	

**Special note:** In 2019 we changed our fiscal year end from March 31 to December 31. This Annual Report is a transition to this new fiscal period. Thus all financials, activities and statistics relate to the 9-month period from April 1 to December 31, 2019.

### A Big Thank You to our 2019 Project Funders

City of Toronto  
Canadian Community Fund (Unifor)  
The Law Foundation of Ontario  
United Way Greater Toronto

### SPECIAL THANKS TO:

**Our Members**, who make all our work possible

**Our allies** – union members, social justice and student activists, faith leaders, healthcare providers, and community partners - for your commitment and spirit to improving the lives of all workers

**Our legal volunteers** who give their time, energy and support

**Our Monthly Solidarity Supporters** (you know who you are!)

### We would like to especially acknowledge the following for their support, guidance and commitment to social justice:

- The Atkinson Charitable Foundation
- The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation
- The Maytree Foundation
- Ontario Employment Education and Research Centre
- Parkdale Community Legal Services

### 2019 Board of Directors

**Chair:** Nandalall Budhu  
**Vice-Chair:** Yvette LeClair  
**Secretary:** Debbie Taylor  
**Treasurer:** Sarvananthan Thanaraja  
**Members:** Amelia White, Tim Vining, Zelda Cumberbatch

### Staff

**Executive Director:** Deena Ladd  
**Administrative Coordinator:** Brenda Campbell  
**Administrator:** Deborah Williams  
**Organizers:** Beixi Liu, Erendira Bravo, Jared Ong, Martha Burbano, Nadira Begam, Navneet Aujla, Nil Sendil, Pam Frache, Shawna Dixon, Tharmilan Nadarajah

### Community & Senior Leaders

Abdullahi Barre  
David Harris  
Linda Bernard  
Saynab Hussein  
Yahui Wang

### Interns

Israt Chowdhury  
Joy Edwards  
Susana Galleguillos

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📌 WorkersActionCentre

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FIGHT FOR  
**\$15 & FAIRNESS**

Join the movement.

Text FIGHT to  
647-360-9487

✉ info@15andFairness.org

🐦 @FairWagesNow #15andFairness

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[www.15andFairness.org](http://www.15andFairness.org)