



**CUPE GLOBAL JUSTICE FUND
APPLICATION FORM**

Project Name End Labour Trafficking! Regularize!
Date 2021 – 2022
Project Sponsor CUPE Local ____
Contact Person
Partner Organization Migrante Canada
Contact Person

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Migrante Canada is a Canada-wide alliance of Filipino migrant and immigrant organizations. It was founded in October 2010 and has 13 chapters and member organizations across Canada. We are based in Vancouver, Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Winnipeg, Toronto, Barry, Ottawa, Montreal, Sherbrooke and Quebec City.

This project will allow Migrante Canada to continue to:

1. Organize and hold workshops with its local chapters, member organizations and migrant justice networks regarding the situation of temporary foreign workers here in Canada. This will also include discussions on the global context on forced migration with the goal of mobilizing ally organizations and networks to become advocates for change, in Canada and globally.
2. Reach out, organize, and hold workshops with temporary foreign workers, especially in under-served communities on rights, capacity building to assert these rights, with the goal of encouraging workers to self organize and form Migrante chapters and/or migrant workers support groups.

The main focus of the project will be discussion sessions with undocumented/non-status workers gain insight about their experiences and guidance on how to support their advocacy and determine the best way to share their stories without putting them at risk.

THE CONTEXT:

The global COVID-19 pandemic has painfully exposed longstanding problems particularly the disparity among classes in our society. Of all the workers, migrants, refugees, and displaced people are the most vulnerable during a global pandemic. The recent mass infections in a Cargill meat processing plant in Alberta, where over 70% of its workers were migrants, is one example and just the tip of the iceberg. The effects of the pandemic have revealed critical gaps in Canada's social programs particularly healthcare system and emergency relief program, and it's exposed the particular vulnerability of precarious workers.

COVID-19 has exposed additional issues faced by migrants, including housing insecurity, being forced to live in close quarters inside shared housing. There are other threats not just to health. For many migrant workers, especially the undocumented migrants, COVID-19 also threatened their security as governments conduct crackdown operations, tightening border security, or setting the stage for increased surveillance as part of their COVID-19 response. This COVID-19 response against migrants and other displaced peoples is referred to as the weaponization of the pandemic. COVID-19 has affected us all but not all of us are experiencing this pandemic in the same ways.

In Canada, a two-tier immigration system allowed a group of working-class migrants' temporary status, while cherry-picking those that will be given access to pathways to immigration. Their temporary immigration status renders them vulnerable, and it exacerbates the precarity they already experience at work and by the insecurity they experience after being displaced from their home countries. Losing their immigration

status means they will become undocumented and even more vulnerable to exploitation.

For decades, Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program has made it difficult for caregivers – and impossible for foreign workers in different sectors – to become permanent residents. This approach has resulted in widespread complaints and well-documented cases of exploitation and abuse of workers at the hands of employers and recruiters.

Workers have fallen through the cracks and become undocumented due to:

1. Absence of clear pathways for permanent residency.
2. The onerous immigration requirements in Canada.
3. Lack of incentives to return home, including lack of job opportunities, high levels of poverty, natural calamities and impacts of privatization and foreign intervention in their home countries.

Thousands of temporary foreign workers lost their status when Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada placed a time limit on how long workers could stay in Canada and refused to issue new work permits. This was called the "four-in, four-out" rule, and migrant justice advocates fought hard to have this unjust rule eliminated.

While positive changes have been made to improve the working conditions of temporary foreign workers in Canada, including addressing prolonged family separation, workplace exploitation and abuse, and ending tied employment to a specific employer, not all migrant workers are able to take advantage of these changes. Many migrant workers have become and remain undocumented, making their lives more precarious. It is morally and financially beneficial for the Canadian government to regularize their status so they can regain their dignity, receive full compensation for their work, pay taxes, and contribute to Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan.

Regularization of undocumented/non-status migrants is not new in Canada. In 1967 to 1984, the Canadian government granted status to 'illegal migrants', a category that included refused refugee claimants, visa overstayers and others who entered Canada under different immigration streams but lost their status.

Migrante Canada, through years of working with temporary foreign workers for justice and human rights, has gained credibility and the trust of the temporary foreign workers community. Because of the expertise demonstrated in migrant justice, many undocumented/non-status migrants now come to Migrante for support without fear of being reported to authorities and deported.

LOCAL GOALS: *What do you hope to accomplish for the members you represent?*

This project will enable CUPE members to:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the issues facing undocumented/non-status migrants, including who they are and why they have become undocumented, and the challenges and barriers they face.
- Engage and take action to support initiatives, including policy advocacy towards regularization of undocumented/non-status migrants.
- Have the capacity to speak confidently on the issue and become allies of migrant workers.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES: *List the activities you intend to take to achieve these goals.*

RATIONALE: *How does your project deal with issues or problems faced by members?*

CUPE members may have experiences as migrant workers or have family members facing the issues the project seeks to address. They may also have a friend or an acquaintance who is or who knows an undocumented/non-status migrant worker and do not know how to react to the negative narratives on non-status migrants, what to do and how to help. This project will help them gain deeper understanding on the issues and challenges, faced by undocumented/non-status migrants, and how can we as local can help improve their situation and support regularization of their status.

PARTNER GOALS: *What does your partner organization hope to accomplish?*

Migrante Canada aims to:

- Expose the extent of international labour trafficking in Canada.
- Educate the people in Canada of Canada's role in the global trade of people.
- Penalize labour traffickers, agencies and unscrupulous immigration consultants.
- Demand the Canadian government to create a robust and enforceable anti-labour trafficking policy.
- Demand the Canadian government to immediately regularize the situation for victims of trafficking.

ACTIVITIES: *List the activities your partner intends to take to achieve these goals.*

1. Create campaign materials and education primers on labour trafficking and Canada's role in the displacement of people.
2. Through workshops and discussion groups, build capacity among non-status migrants, trafficked migrants and precarious workers.
3. Campaign for undocumented peoples' access to temporary resident permit. (This can be in the form of an open work permit at the minimum, and immediate status for migrant workers and refugees at the maximum.)
4. Campaign for access to health insurance for migrants.

Because of the current global pandemic, it is unclear whether airline travel in Canada will be by the summer or even the fall, so alternative plans for the project have been considered. The workshops and discussion groups can be conducted online, and individual discussions can be done by phone or video conference. The project team will store their data in a cloud-based folder which will be kept private to ensure confidentiality and to protect the data.

The Migrante Canada executive committee and the regional councils representatives will lead this project. This team will be primarily responsible for coordinating the project implementation.

ACTIVITY TIMELINE:

- Phase I August - November
 - Workshop development
 - Outreach
 - Discussion groups
 - Individual meetings
- Phase II December – February
 - Campaign planning – national council meeting
 - Creation of campaign materials,
- Primers
- Online workers resources through migrante.ca
 - Education and Information
- Workshops
- Launch of “Balitang Migrante” podcast - a podcast for and by migrant workers
- Phase III March – May
 - 2 public forums with migrants and migrant justice activists and allies
 - Project assessments

FINANCES

List the amount of money you have budgeted for each activity broken down by the amount requested from Global Justice and the amount supplied by either the CUPE sponsor or the partner organization.

Sponsors	All activities
CUPE Global Justice Fund	\$15,000
CUPE Local	
Total	\$ 15,000

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET ESTIMATES

Activity	CDN \$
Project Coordination/Administration	\$4,500
Project team meetings	\$ 500
Travel & Accommodation	\$5,000
Campaign costs, education, and information (printing, podcast mic, soundproof materials, etc.)	\$2,000
Migrant worker participation expenses (migrant workers travel and accommodation, venue, refreshments, lost pay)	\$3,000
Total	\$15,000

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Are any organizations helping you set up and run the project? Yes

Migrante Canada will work informally with migrants' service institutions, such as Migrants Resource Centre Canada (MRCC), PINAY, Alberta Workers Association for Research and Education (AWARE) and Damayan Society for Migrants' Education and Resources.

The services they will be providing: Meeting logistics, identifying, and inviting temporary foreign workers and speakers, participating in collecting and analysing information received, support and consultation of campaign material content and strategy.

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