



## **SEARCH FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### **THE SOLIDARITY CENTER**

**Washington, DC**

The American Center for International Solidarity (The Solidarity Center) is looking for a new Executive Director. The Center promotes rights of working people the world over through strengthening workers' organizations that are independent of employers or governments. This is an extraordinary opportunity for a talented leader committed to the global trade union movement to make a substantial contribution to improving the working conditions and living conditions of millions of people around the globe.

The new ED will build on the Center's impressive record and forge new pathways for international collaboration to further the rights of workers.

In response to requests from workers and unions in other countries, the Solidarity Center provides assistance and resources to help build strong and effective trade unions and thereby more just and equitable societies. Its programs offer a wide range of education, training, research and legal support covering basic human and worker rights, union skills, advocacy, occupational safety and health, economic literacy and civic and voter education. These programs are designed for workers, unions, and community organizations in developing countries. They seek to promote democratic practices and play a role in creating public policies and a robust civil society.

Globalization has made it increasingly evident that the interests of American workers are inextricably linked with those of workers internationally. Workers often share the same employers, and even when they don't, they share the same vulnerabilities and the same objectives. The new Executive Director will be expected to significantly strengthen collaboration among the American labor movement and trade unions around the world to promote their shared interests and maximize their impact.

Established by the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in 1997, the Solidarity Center is headquartered in

Washington, DC with offices in 23 countries. It has a staff of 200 and a yearly budget of \$30M. It currently sponsors programs in 54 countries.

The new Executive Director will play a pivotal role in increasing the scale, impact and visibility of the Center by strengthening and refining its programs, its engagement with other similarly committed organizations within and outside of the labor movement, its fundraising and communications strategies and its management.

## **HISTORY AND CURRENT SITUATION**

Since its beginnings more than a century ago, the American labor movement has supported workers around the world. The Solidarity Center is part of that tradition. The AFL-CIO established the Center in 1997 by consolidating four labor institutes: the American Institute for Free Labor Development, the Asia-American Free Labor Institute, the African-American Labor Center, and the Free Trade Union Institute.

The Center has received financial support from the U.S. government, foundations, the AFL-CIO and other non-governmental organizations to promote the cause of workers and the development of democratic trade unions in countries all over the world. The Solidarity Center Board, composed of AFL-CIO elected leaders, provides strategic leadership and oversight to the Center's programs.

The Center's work is primarily organized regionally with strong U.S. and field presence in the Americas, in Africa, in the Middle East and North Africa, in Asia and Eastern Europe. It also has a Trade Union Strengthening department that provides coordination and strong technical assistance to the regions in trade union organizing and bargaining capacity building.

The Solidarity Center has established the following three programmatic priorities to help build the capacity of trade unions and their worker rights allies around the world:

- 1. Advance internationally recognized labor rights and standards and achieve concrete improvements in living and working conditions through strategic union organizing and bargaining campaigns.**

*"The rules of the global economy should be aimed at improving the rights, livelihoods, security, and opportunities of people, families and communities around the world."* - World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004

The Solidarity Center works to assist workers in the developing world to build organizations that can win and enforce these kinds of rules. It trains union

organizers and leaders in organizing and bargaining, promotes the sharing of strategies and information among union activists and provides support for struggling unions all over the world.

**2. Advance internationally recognized labor rights and standards and achieve concrete improvements in living and working conditions through global thematic advocacy campaigns**

Some of the fights to win the basic labor standards must be waged country by country albeit with the support of trade unionists and other progressive forces from around the world. Some of these standards are best addressed as challenges simultaneously facing the entire global economy and tackled as such.

Key among these is the issue of Migration and Human Trafficking. The Solidarity Center has partnered with workers' organizations, trade unions, governments and civil society coalitions around the world to address this issue. It has created community and workplace-based safe migration and counter-trafficking strategies that emphasize prevention, prosecution and protection.

The Solidarity Center is also in the process of establishing a Gender Equity initiative to enhance its work on behalf of women workers. Already, tens of thousands of women have participated in the Center's leadership training that provides them with the skills they need to have a voice in their unions, in their workplace, in their country and in the global economy. The Center hopes to build on this track record to join with other women's rights advocates and programs to create more world-wide progress in raising women's working and living conditions and in achieving equity in the world's workplaces and communities.

**3. Challenge and reform laws, policies and practices that suppress worker and human rights, undermine freedom of association and collective bargaining, and result in discrimination against, and marginalization of workers.**

Freedom of association to form and join unions is the foundation for all other worker rights. In many countries governments and corporations routinely, and sometime viciously, deny workers their legal right to form free and independent unions.

The Solidarity Center is committed to helping its partner-organizations around the world to firmly establish these and the other collective and individual rights that will allow for an autonomous and powerful voice for workers in countries throughout the globe. It does this in a variety of ways—depending on the concrete situation in each country.

One such effort is the Center's Global Economy and World Trade Initiative that is designed to incorporate worker rights into world trade and investment agreements.

The Solidarity Center intends to pursue each of its programmatic priorities in a manner that strengthens global labor union bodies, including the International Trade Union Confederation, global union federations and national union centers, and fully engages and draws on the resources of the AFL-CIO, its affiliate unions and state and central labor bodies.

For more detailed information about the Solidarity Center and its programs, consult its website at [www.solidaritycenter.org](http://www.solidaritycenter.org).

## **THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The new Executive Director will report to the organization's 11-member Board of Trustees. The membership of the Board can be found on the Center's website. In conjunction with the Board, s/he will be responsible for determining the organization's strategic direction and major policy initiatives. In addition, the ED will have the responsibility for the organization's internal and external operations, including execution of policy initiatives, communications, fundraising, budgeting and staffing.

## **OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The next Executive Director of the Solidarity Center will inherit a solid foundation of respected programs, a talented and dedicated staff and a historically reliable source of core funding. The Center is uniquely positioned to make substantial progress going forward. To build on these strengths and increase the reach and impact of the Center, the Board has set forth the following objectives for the new ED to achieve during the first 18 to 36 months of his or her tenure.

### **Review and, where necessary, refine and clarify the strategic direction of the Solidarity Center and its programs.**

The new ED, in conjunction with the Board, the staff and other stakeholders, will identify the organization's priorities, opportunities and challenges and make any changes necessary to strengthen and clarify its strategic direction and programming.

One of the challenges involved in this undertaking is the difficulty in evaluating the effectiveness of much of the organization's work. The problems the Center addresses are large and intractable. Success is always hard earned, usually incremental and often not apparent for many years. Nonetheless, the new Executive Director will be expected to make progress towards measuring the effectiveness of the work the organization does and creating a culture of continuous improvement- sharing best practices, and learning from its experiences and those of other organizations in order to increase the impact of its work.

**Increase the profile of the issues facing workers in the global economy and of the Solidarity Center.**

The new Executive Director will be expected to raise the profile of the Center by engaging more directly with the media, the human rights community, the leadership and rank and file of the US labor movement and with the community of thought leaders and policy makers inside and outside of Washington, DC.

**Diversify and increase the Center's funding.**

The Center receives funding from both public and private non-profit sources. These include the National Endowment for Democracy, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Labor, the AFL-CIO, private foundations and national and international labor organizations. The new ED will be expected to build on the organization's base of core funding and increase both the amount of money the organization raises and the variety of sources from which the money comes.

**Establish the role of the Center as a bridge between the American labor movement and labor movements in other countries.**

Strengthen the Center's relationships with the AFL-CIO headquarters staff, affiliates, the International Trade Union Confederation (IUTC) and other international unions as well as relationships among these groups in order to foster increased collaboration and efficacy in promoting the rights of workers all over the world.

Making the case to American workers that their self-interest is inextricably tied to the progress that workers in other parts of the world are making is an essential element in this effort.

**Review the makeup and organization of the staff to ensure that both are aligned with the organization's goals.**

One of the great strengths of the Center is its committed and skilled staff, many of whom work in dangerous situations in highly charged political atmospheres around the world. Two unions represent the organization's employees, OPEIU for the workers in the United States and the Newspaper Guild for those in foreign countries.

The new Executive Director will be expected to ensure that the Center is organized in a way to maximize the efficiency and impact of the staff. S/he should establish both systems and a culture that breaks down unnecessary barriers, encourages communication and cooperation, and enables workers to share best practices across program and regional lines. In addition, s/he will put in place programs to maximize opportunities for the staff's professional

development and to encourage efficiency and reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks as much as possible.

## **THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

This position requires a person with policy savvy, powerful communications and fundraising skills and a deep seated commitment and understanding of the global labor movement. While no one person will possess all of the qualities enumerated below, the ideal candidate would have the following professional and personal characteristics:

- A demonstrated commitment to the goals and values of the Solidarity Center. Experience working with the labor movement.
- Excellent communication skills, particularly an ability to articulate the Center's aspirations and accomplishments to funders, the media, labor unions policy makers and thought leaders inside and outside the country.
- An appetite, aptitude and successful experience fundraising from both governmental and nongovernmental organizations.
- A track record of success running a complex nonprofit organization which involves team building, budgeting, and programming.
- A sensitivity to leading and managing in a unionized environment.
- A sense of urgency about the challenges facing workers around the world combined the patience and persistence that are prerequisites for success in dealing with these challenges,
- Experience recruiting and retaining a talented and diverse staff.
- Experience in Washington, DC policymaking, advocacy and/or politics. Familiarity with the US Congress and Executive branch.
- A broad and deep knowledge about the issues affecting workers around the world.
- A deliberate, but not impulsive, decision making style.
- An ability to cultivate strategic partnerships both in this country and abroad.
- The self knowledge to recognize gaps in his or her knowledge, experience and temperament along with the ability to hire people to make up for those deficits.

To Apply:

Arnie Miller and Company has been retained to conduct this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to: [maryeking@comcast.net](mailto:maryeking@comcast.net).