The Solidarity Center is a non-profit organization that works with unions, NGOs and community groups worldwide to advance worker rights and achieve equitable economic development in countries where globalization has made the lives of vulnerable people even more precarious. It supports programs and projects—among them, trainings, education campaigns, legal aid, research, transparency initiatives—that help workers understand and exercise their rights, improve their working and living conditions and build independent unions. From June 2012 through June 2013, Solidarity Center programs assisted thousands of working people in 62 countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

2012–2013 Solidarity Center programs reached tens of thousands of workers in 2012 and the first quarter of 2013. Among our outreach efforts, we provided:

- Labor law and worker rights education programs to 1,465 female and male workers in BANGLADESH
- Legal resources to more than 300 workers preparing to leave MOLDOVA to counter human trafficking
- Support for garment workers in CENTRAL AMERICA to win $570,000 in back wages and severance
- Organizing trainings in LIBERIA, ultimately helping 500 palm workers organize unions
- Support to the kindergarten teachers’ union organizing effort in Jenin, PALESTINE, which added 140 members.

The Solidarity Center’s mission is to help build a global labor movement by strengthening the economic and political power of workers around the world through effective, independent and democratic unions.

Editors: Tula Connell, Kate Conradt
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ON THE COVER: A Bangladeshi garment worker walks to lunch during a break in Dhaka, Bangladesh. (AP Photo/Pavel Rahman).
When the Rana Plaza building collapsed outside of Dhaka, Bangladesh, on April 24, 2013, ultimately killing more than 1,200 garment workers, it once again showed the world what garment workers had always known: Going to work could mean losing your life. The tragedy came only months after a massive fire at the country’s Tazreen Fashions factory, which killed 112 workers.

As the largest international worker rights organization on the ground, the Solidarity Center provided critical support for workers and their families following both disasters, served as a primary source for policymakers and media seeking information about the garment industry and gathered key data documenting ongoing factory safety and health hazards.

The Solidarity Center’s Washington office—in coalition with allies and separately—called for all parties along the supply chain to protect and respect worker rights, ensure the prevention of avoidable workplace disasters and enable workers to refuse to enter buildings they know to be unsafe. The Solidarity Center and its labor partners, including the Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union Federation (BIGUF), Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS) and Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF), have redoubled efforts to support union organizing in factories and are successfully urging the government to recognize worker’s unions.

The Solidarity Center’s rapid and substantive response stemmed from more than 20 years’ work assisting Bangladeshi workers form unions; challenging illegal firings or unpaid wages; and improving workplace health and safety standards. Many of the country’s 4 million garment workers who labor in unregulated and often poorly constructed factories are the foundation for the country’s most lucrative export sector—the $19 billion ready-made garment industry. Together with unions and activists, these workers have long fought for the right to organize and to demand safe factories and humane working conditions—with the support of the Solidarity Center, global union federations and advocacy groups.

The threat of lost U.S. trade benefits and consumer outrage at the deaths of so many vulnerable workers, most of them young women, spurred the Bangladeshi government to increase factory inspections along with other measures. Whether these steps will lead to real improvements in working conditions remains to be seen. The Solidarity Center will continue to support Bangladesh’s garment workers as they strive for greater voice—and the strength found in their union numbers.
In the past year, the Solidarity Center organized programs that helped unions add members, strengthen their organizations and triumph over repression. As a result, thousands of workers are better able to exercise their rights.

Workers made significant strides throughout SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA. Near Jakarta, the Indonesian Metalworkers Trade Union Federation (FSPMI) increased membership by more than 12,000 workers in 2012 and now represents more than 40 percent of all electronics workers in the Bekasi area. In addition, the Industrial Workers Union Federation (SPN) increased membership by more than 5,000 workers in the footwear and apparel industry. Solidarity Center programs helped workers develop union skills to better understand their industries and participate in collective bargaining.

In Thailand, with the support of the Solidarity Center, the Thai Electronics, Automotive and Metal Workers Union (TEAM) formed a national federation of metal workers, the Confederation of Thailand Metal Workers (CTM), uniting 21 local unions in the metal and steel industries and increasing the collective bargaining power of some 12,000 workers. Also, the Federation of Thailand Automobile Workers (TAW) organized and registered a local union at a new auto assembly plant that ultimately will employ 10,000 workers. In other Asia highlights, more than 1,500 employees of a Bangladesh telecommunications company formed a union. And the Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporter Association (BFFEA) and Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation (BSFF) signed an agreement with the Solidarity Center to implement worker rights according to Bangladesh labor law and promote International Labor Organization (ILO) core labor standards.

Around the world, the Solidarity Center works with marginalized communities to support their efforts to improve lives and livelihoods. In the AMERICAS, the Solidarity Center continued in partnership with the Colombian labor...
move movement to improve conditions for Afro-Colombian workers. The Afro-Colombian Labor Council—the first organization to address exploitation of Afro-Colombians—was launched during a Solidarity Center-sponsored forum held in coordination with the U.S.-based Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). The forum drew nearly 500 Afro-Colombian workers.

In Central America, workers formed 19 new unions comprising 2,859 new members. Three of seven collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) negotiated were first contracts—including an historic agreement for Nicaraguan banana workers after a decade of struggle.

Building on four years of union-strengthening efforts by the Solidarity Center, the Mexican Union of Telephone Workers (STRM) affiliated new members through a revamped organizing strategy that included training and professionalizing its team of labor educators—and a focus on achieving recognition of union rights at one of Mexico’s largest call centers. Also in Mexico, the Solidarity Center ramped up its work to support auto-parts workers trying to oust a company union in Ciudad Acuña, in partnership with the Border Committee of Women Workers (Comité Fronterizo de Obreras, CFO), United Steelworkers (USW), Mexican mineworker union Los Mineros and the UAW.

In EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA, where anti-union forces are intensifying, workers and their unions boosted membership and negotiated new CBAs. The Educators and Sciences Free Trade Union of Georgia (ESFTUG), with Solidarity Center assistance, re-signed more than 10,000 former members who resigned under management pressure. In Ukraine, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (CFTUU) formed the national Association of Transport Trade Unions of Ukraine (ATTUU) uniting more than 15,000 trade union members from rail, metro, aviation and maritime locals across the country. And in Kyrgyzstan, workers formed new unions in the Parliament, four vocational schools and the Chui water-basin management authority.

In AFRICA, Solidarity Center union partner, the United Workers Union of Liberia (UWUL), signed an historic collective bargaining agreement with the largest mining multinational in Liberia. UWUL also helped hundreds of workers form unions, including one at a multi-national mine where 80 percent of workers voted to join. The Solidarity Center and the USW have provided long-term training, support and assistance to UWUL and other union partners in Liberia.

With assistance from the Solidarity Center, the Human Rights Network of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) held an exchange in Colombia to promote legal and political remedies for union victims of political violence in Latin America. Representatives from Brazil’s Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT), Chile’s Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Chile (CUT) and the Confederación de Unidad Sindical de Guatemala (CUSG) shared examples of union involvement in post-conflict truth commissions with counterparts at the three Colombian national trade union confederations. More than 3,000 Colombian union leaders and activists have been killed since the 1980s.

The General Agricultural and Allied Workers Union of Liberia (GAAWUL) organized 500 workers at a palm oil producer in Grand Bassa and 218 workers at a Bong County rubber plantation. The victories follow a Solidarity Center-sponsored organizing program for affiliates of the Liberia Labor Congress (LLC). And with USW and Solidarity Center support, the Firestone Agricultural Workers of Liberia (FAWUL) negotiated a third two-year CBA with Firestone Natural Rubber-Liberia.

And in the MIDDLE EAST, the Solidarity Center supported two new independent labor unions in Egypt, the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU) and Egyptian Democratic Labor Congress (EDLC), and continued to stand with Algeria’s National Autonomous Union of Public Administration Workers (SNAPAP) by providing trainings on trade union governance and management, helping the unions develop platforms to enhance member voices and defend worker rights.
In the past year, the Solidarity Center supported advocacy and education campaigns to defend the rights of women workers, improve the status of workers in the informal economy, fight for safer workplaces, combat human trafficking and increase the minimum wage.

**FIGHTING FOR GENDER EQUITY** at the workplace and in societies around the world is a cross-cutting theme of Solidarity Center work. In 2012, it began an institution-wide process of evaluation and education to ensure its programs promote gender equity and enable union and community partners to move toward equitable leadership and workplace agendas that reflect the concerns of all members.

Union partners are addressing gender inequality on a variety of levels. The **South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union** (SADSAWU) was instrumental in pushing for **South Africa’s** ratification of ILO Convention 189, Decent Work for Domestic Workers. The Solidarity Center provided legal analysis and support to SADSAWU to identify where the country’s current law falls short of the convention. Also in Africa, the **National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives** (NANNM) addressed gender imbalances by increasing the number of women holding leadership positions, instituting a new gender policy and creating a mobile child-care center for parents attending union meetings and functions.

In **Morocco**, the Solidarity Center supported the **Confédération Démocratique du Travail** (CDT) in a multisector training program for local and national women leaders focused on fighting violence and discrimination in the workplace. The program helped build the union’s capacity to address gender-based discrimination, particularly in the agriculture sector. Working to support women **maquila** workers in **Mexico**, the Solidarity Center, its partners in the human rights community and the AFL-CIO helped bring four sexual harassment claims to the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

To combat the global wage gap for women, the Solidarity Center developed and disseminated a
tool that enables unions and partners to submit gender discrimination complaints to the ILO and UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Of the millions of vulnerable workers around the world, many are part of the growing INFORMAL ECONOMY. As part of a multiyear research project supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Solidarity Center and research partners Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) produced studies on best practices for organizing informal economy workers. (See Page 11.)

Domestic workers comprise a large percentage of the informal economy, and in Kenya, Solidarity Center technical assistance and financial support to the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotel, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) resulted in 272 domestic workers joining the union.

Around the world, the Solidarity Center works hand-in-hand with union partners and NGOs to raise awareness, educate workers and COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING. For example, millions of migrants, most of them from Asia, labor in Persian Gulf countries as domestic, construction and oil workers. The Solidarity Center increased coordination of its programs that support labor organizations in countries of origin like Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Philippines with efforts in the Gulf that enable migrant workers to understand their rights and to use the legal system.

In Indonesia, Solidarity Center programs focused on empowering workers who have survived trafficking to seek justice and challenge the atmosphere of impunity. Last year, 192 workers received shelter, medical and mental health services, legal aid and repatriation or resettlement assistance through the work of the Solidarity Center and a partner.

Solidarity Center union partners actively advocated to IMPROVE HEALTH AND SAFETY CONDITIONS for workers. In South Africa, the Solidarity Center continued to implement the “Be Faithful, Be Tested, Be Union” HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness program in cooperation with the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA). The Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV) and the Solidarity Center commemorated the 20th anniversary of a deadly toy factory fire in Thailand with the release of a Solidarity Center-supported legal resource for worker safety and health advocates in Asia.

The Solidarity Center also works with unions in their efforts to INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE, which especially benefits women and other vulnerable workers. For example, the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) mobilized hundreds of members to march through the city and call for a minimum wage increase for all workers. The government indicated it would accede to that demand. Over the past 10 years, the Solidarity Center has helped build HKCTU’s capacity to advocate for better wages.

The Solidarity Center worked with four unions in the Haitian garment sector—Entè Sendikal Premye Me-Batay Ouvriye, Confédération des Forces Ouvrières Haïtiennes (CFOH) and Centrale Nationale des Ouvriers Haïtiens (CNOHA)—as they formed a new coordinating union committee, Kolektif Sendikal Izin Tekstil Yo (KOSIT), to advocate joint positions, primarily enforcement of the garment sector’s minimum wage law and better piece-rate wages.

The Solidarity Center has helped unions ACHIEVE A VOICE IN ECONOMIC DECISIONS that affect workers’ lives and to support their arguments through research and strategic exchanges of information. For example, it convened more than 30 representatives of cane sugar and ethanol workers, unions from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Honduras in Brazil to share strategies on how to link biofuels production to sustainable development and decent livelihoods for rural workers. Leaders of Brazil’s three largest trade union centers (CUT, UGT and Força Sindical), Brazilian Labor Minister Carlos Brizola Neto and representatives of the Office of the Secretary General of the President of Brazil, cane sugar industry association UNICA and São Paulo Rural Workers Federation (FERAESP) participated.

The Solidarity Center also supported research to help unions articulate their concerns to policy-makers. This included a survey on working conditions for Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel; on worker rights violations in projects financed by multilateral institutions in Asia; and a framework for inclusive growth in Zimbabwe.
Over the last year, the Solidarity Center programs have helped workers analyze and draft amendments to labor laws, push back on regressive labor-legislation reform, win compensation following wage theft or illegal firings and receive pro bono legal aid.

The rising trend toward regressive legislation in countries around the world has required unions, worker centers and legal aid networks to develop the legal tools to support vulnerable workers, legally formalize rights and protections, counter impunity, correct business malfeasance and improve workplace standards.

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The Solidarity Center helps unions, worker centers and legal aid networks develop the legal tools to support vulnerable workers, legally formalize rights and protections, counter impunity, correct business malfeasance and improve workplace standards.

The Solidarity Center drafted an analysis of Cambodian labor law reform proposals, which are attempting to exclude public-sector employees (including nurses and teachers) from labor law protection and violate ILO norms and international standards. Disseminated to partners, this analysis is a key tool in organizing against the regressive proposals. Similarly, in Bangladesh, the Solidarity Center joined with the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) to provide unions with an analysis of proposed labor law reforms, particularly measures related to union formation and the...
right to strike in garment factories. The Solidarity Center’s union partners submitted five possible amendments to the 2006 Bangladesh Labor Act. The government accepted three, including one that continues a past practice of union representation of workers in court proceedings.

Unions in Kyrgyzstan, with support of the Solidarity Center, opposed a bill passed by Parliament that would have narrowed worker rights—including outlawing strikes in several sectors and eliminating the minimum wage, worker safety provisions and requirements to warn workers before dismissal. The unions succeeded in preventing the bill from becoming law. Likewise, Ukrainian unions and civil-society groups succeeded in preventing passage of a regressive labor law, with Solidarity Center support.

In China, millions of workers have become disabled because of unsafe working conditions. With support from organizations like Labour Action China (LAC), a Solidarity Center partner, many of these workers have formed networks to educate and empower workers with disabilities in their communities, raise awareness of disability rights and occupational diseases, and advocate for their rights through targeted campaigns and policy reforms. In one highlight, during the UN review of China’s implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, LAC advocated for reforming the current system by including rights for people with disabilities, such as workers disabled from occupational disease.

The newly elected Georgian government drafted amendments to its labor code to bring it closer to compliance with ILO conventions. The revised code resulted from work by the Solidarity Center, which provided an analysis showing how the law failed to protect worker rights. And the Haitian labor movement, with the assistance of the Solidarity Center, prepared proposals for a new labor law and advocated for the legislation at an ILO-facilitated meeting with government and employers. The new draft labor code is expected in late 2013.

The Solidarity Center also provides legal assistance to help working people who have experienced wage theft, suffered injuries on the job, been fired for their union activities or been subjected to other abuses WIN COMPENSATION AND JUSTICE. Such support includes helping vulnerable workers navigate the local court system.

Workers around the world—in Asia, Eastern Europe and the Americas—last year won hundreds of thousands of dollars in compensation for injuries suffered on the job or other rights violations. For example, in Central America, the Solidarity Center won three agreements with apparel brands to pay $570,000 in back wages and severance to 453 garment workers in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In Cambodia, the Solidarity Center assisted more than 200 garment workers enforce their right under bankruptcy law to receive severance and other obligations owed them before other creditors are paid. It also worked with unions, the Cambodian government and the international financial sector to ensure that workers in the telecommunications and construction sectors receive the same priority.

The Solidarity Center also holds consultations and sets up legal clinics for workers, especially vulnerable workers. For example, the Legal Advisory Center (LAC) in Kyrgyzstan provided consultations to dozens of workers, most of whom labor in the informal economy as market vendors, construction workers and service providers. The Solidarity Center established LAC in early 2012 at the Kyrgyz National University to provide pro bono legal advice to workers, unions and the public.

And in Moldova, the Solidarity Center and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF) launched the Information Center for Migrant Workers (CIMM) and a worker rights website to combat human trafficking. This year CIMM provided legal and other information to more than 300 workers preparing to leave Moldova for jobs abroad.
WHO We Are

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Danuta Dobosz, Office of Program Reporting and Evaluation
Sarah McKenzie, Trade Union Strengthening

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Lisa McGowan, Gender Equality
Neha Misra, Migration and Human Trafficking

Senior Leadership

The Solidarity Center has 230 staff members in Washington, D.C., and around the world.

Shawna Bader-Blau, Executive Director
Kate Doherty, Deputy Executive Director
Mark Hankin, Director of Government Affairs

FY 2012 REGIONAL SPENDING
($ million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>FY 2012 Spending</th>
<th>FY 2011 Spending</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>(9.2)</td>
<td>(7.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>(7.8)</td>
<td>(6.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>(2.1)</td>
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<td>MENA</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLOBAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHER PROGRAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>$30,549,977</td>
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Solidarity Center

YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2012, AND 2011

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<td>197,194</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total support and revenue</td>
<td>$33,304,927</td>
<td>$30,549,977</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Following the devastating January 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti, the Solidarity Center established a relief fund to route donations from U.S. unions and workers to Haitian workers and their families in need. The final report on these efforts, describes how the Solidarity Center and its partners significantly impacted the lives of Haitian workers and their families.

In 2012–2013, the Solidarity Center launched Catalysts for Change, an ongoing series produced with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy. The first five reports feature the working people, their unions and activists who are advancing worker rights and greater equity in their societies, often under trying circumstances. Their experience and efforts provide real, transferable lessons for others seeking to effect positive change.

TUNISIAN WOMEN: Sustaining the Fight for Equal Rights (2013)  
English, Arabic, French, Spanish

SRI LANKA: Migrants Gain Voice and Protections (2013)  
English, Arabic, French, Spanish

Dominican Republic; in English, Arabic, French, Spanish

Unions Create Democratic Space in Zimbabwe (2013)  
English, Arabic, French, Spanish

CAMBODIA: Vocal Coalition Makes Legal History (2013)  
English, Arabic, French, Spanish

In 2011, the Solidarity Center launched a multiyear research project to study the informal economy, migration, gender and rule of law—which focus on vulnerable workers who have few rights and remain at the bottom of the wage scale. In the past year, Solidarity Center research partners Rutgers and WIEGO produced case study reports on organizing and collective bargaining of migrant workers and workers in the informal economy. In addition, the Solidarity Center produced a report examining the socioeconomic rights of domestic workers. The reports were funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

GENDER EQUALITY AND LABOR MOVEMENTS: Toward A Global Perspective (Rutgers, 2012)

LEGAL AND POLICY TOOLS TO MEET INFORMAL WORKERS DEMANDS: Lessons from India (WIEGO, 2012)

EMERGENT SOLIDARITIES: Labor Movement Responses to Migrant Workers in the Dominican Republic and Jordan (Rutgers, 2013)

TRADE UNIONS ORGANIZING WORKERS “INFORMALIZED FROM ABOVE:” Case Studies from Cambodia, Colombia, South Africa and Tunisia (Rutgers, 2013)

HOME-BASED WORKERS IN THE EXPORT GARMENT SECTOR IN BANGLADESH: An Exploratory Study in Dhaka City (WIEGO, 2013)

INFORMAL WORKERS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: Case Studies from India, Georgia, Brazil, Liberia and Uruguay (WIEGO, 2013)

DOMESTIC WORKERS AND SOCIOECONOMIC RIGHTS: A South African Case Study (Solidarity Center, 2013)