



Karen Arita (left) facilitating an ergonomics workshop with manufacturing workers in Honduras

Karen Arita worked in an industrial park and manufacturing company in El Progreso, Honduras, for fourteen years. She worked very hard for the company, always proud that she could meet targets and support her son as a single mother, but this would often come at a cost for her health. That experience led her to join her union’s bargaining committee, knowing it was the best way to improve health and safety conditions at her workplace.

Her union activism led her to an occupational health training program organized by the Independent Monitoring Team of Honduras (EMIH). EMIH, a partner organization of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund (SHF), is dedicated to workers’ well-being by linking gender and workers’ rights in export industries. Now a staff member, Karen brings her own experiences when helping others at EMIH’s ergonomics workers’ school. To date,

EMIH has been documenting and working to improve the harsh working conditions for approximately 145,000 workers employed in the garment and agricultural sectors in Honduras.

Our union’s efforts to be a leader in occupational health and safety and to promote women’s rights at work also extend to other countries, such as Peru, which has one



THANI team in Peru with Estela Ospina (second from left) during workers’ rights program graduation

of the lowest unionization rates in South America. SHF proudly supports THANI, a Peruvian women-led organization that provides formal training on labour rights to workers, with a special emphasis on health and safety and gender. As part of its work, THANI is reaching out to workers in traditionally male-dominated sectors where women's issues are often ignored, such as the mining and chemical industry.

With SHF funding, THANI aims to strengthen workers' ability to defend themselves from day-to-day abuse from employers who ignore their right to a safe work environment. Estela Ospina, a co-founder of the organization, brings her lifelong commitment as a labour lawyer and a women's rights defender.

Having conducted extensive research on the conditions faced in labour-intensive industries, Estela is committed to improving workers' health and preventing male harassment at work through a diploma training program.

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund will continue to champion women's international solidarity efforts, making gender a key part of our approach, supporting women in partner organizations to fight for their rights, and working through alliances that raise the bar for women's health and safety everywhere.

To learn more about the Steelworkers Humanity Fund
WWW.USW.CA/SHF



Presentation by THANI team on the impact of COVID-19 on mining unions in Peru

Steelworkers Humanity Fund
234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 800
Toronto, ON M4P 1K7

Phone: 416-487-1571
Fax: 416-487-9308
Email: humanityfund@usw.ca

UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
MÉTALLOS