



BWII
Building and Wood
Workers' International
www.bwint.org

IN ACTION

BWII in ACTION

2020/2021

Regional Report

October 2021



BWII fights back Neoliberalism as it heads to its 5th Congress



Despite the harmful effects of the coronavirus pandemic on different societies and economies throughout Latin American and the Caribbean, ruled by neoliberal policies and state functions reduction to the bare minimum, essentially abandoning the working class, the region has been showing signs of dissatisfaction and resistance, targeting to the reestablishment of governments committed to the working class and to helping the people. This is the case of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru, to name just a few examples.

Whether through elections or mass protests and demonstrations, workers have defended democracy and prevented further labor and social rights deterioration in most countries.

This fight has also included progress in vaccination roll-out programs and solidarity with those most vulnerable, such as migrants, informal workers, as well as standing together with our brothers and sisters from countries that have been greatly affected by the unfair and inhumane embargo of financial assets in Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. We also stand by with Haiti, a strongly-affected country by corruption, political crises and natural disasters.

Together with national trade unions and federations, BWII has been leading this struggle by organizing workers, providing training courses, and encouraging them to fight for formal employment, industries that provide decent jobs, the environment, decent working conditions, and better health and safety conditions at work. Workers are also supported in the fight against discrimination and harassment, as we strive for equal opportunities for young workers and women. Most of our unions have managed to maintain and even improve their collective agreements despite recent economic, health, social and political adversities.

With the support of our comrades and under the leadership of President Per-Olof Sjöo and General Secretary Ambet Yuson, BWII has consolidated as a forceful, class-based, unified, solidary global union, determined to promote social dialogue and political discussions from the grassroots level to the highest reaches of the international system.

Vamos! See you in 2022!
Madrid, Spain, 4-7 October 2022

Saúl Méndez Rodríguez, President of the Regional Committee

Actions and Activities

2020/2021

BWI's response to health, political and economic challenges that have greatly affected our members:

• Solidarity and Humanitarian Aid

Social distancing yes, Worker-distancing, never! This was BWI's sentiment during the most difficult moments of the pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean. International union solidarity has grown stronger, and significant resources have been allocated to protect and assist workers in our sectors and their families - in particular migrants who lost their jobs and their incomes. Lots of contributions have also been sent to affiliated unions to help members and workers in need.



• Declaration on the Political Situation of Latin America and the Caribbean and World Board Declaration

Both declarations, one covering the political situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the other focusing on how the world has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, were created collectively by our affiliates and have been distributed widely, within the 2020 Continental Journey against Neoliberalism and slogan: "For a better world, the motto is to move forward!"

• BWI regional growth and unions recovery

Percentage of paying affiliates as of 05/31/2021

→ 2019

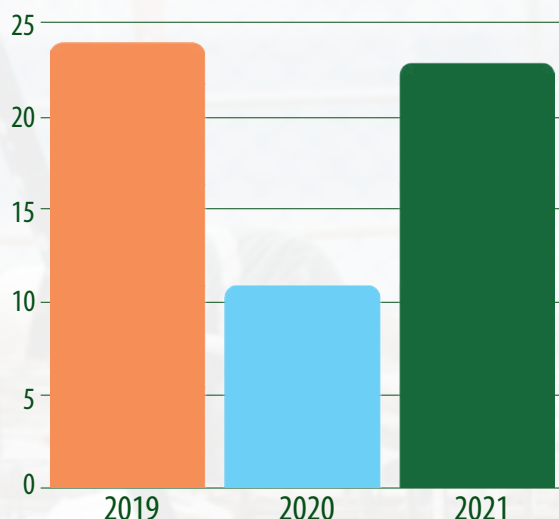
24 out of 110 affiliates = 21,8%

→ 2020

14 out of 133 affiliates = 10,5%

→ 2021

25 out of 116 affiliates = 21,5%



Thematic Actions

• Women

- Campaigns focusing on **gender equality**
- Collective agreements addressing specific **women workers clauses**
- **March 8th Campaign**
- The “**16 Days of Activism on Violence Against Women**” Campaign
- **ILO Convention 190** Ratification in Argentina and Ecuador Campaign
- **33 Women in Trade Union Executive Committees**
- Implementation of BWI Policy **Against Harassment and Discrimination** in the region



• Youth

- Implementation of the **Regional Youth Academy** – training the successor generation
- **Youth Training** (Argentina, Colombia and Panama)
- **English course** for members of the Regional Youth Committee





• Human Rights and Migrant Workers

- Training of Venezuelan migrant workers in Colombia
- Creation of the Regional Trade Union Network on Migration

• Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

- New law proposal on Occupational Hazards in the Dominican Republic
- Implementation of the SINCS-G, BWI and USAC course, Guatemala: Occupational Health and Safety - 53 participants have graduated

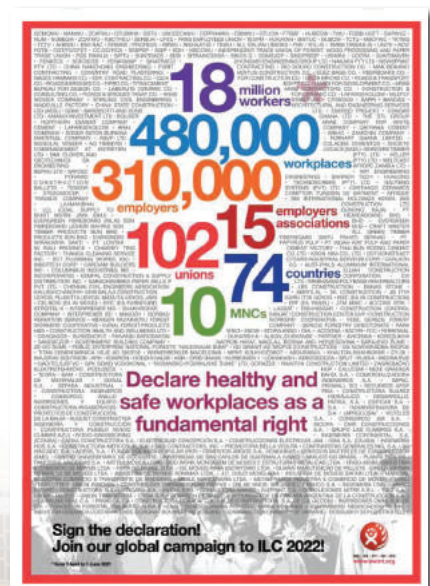


Pedro Julio Alcantara, President of FENTICOMMC, elected to the House of Representatives in the Dominican Republic



Ambet Yuson, Guy Ryder and Tos Añonuevo and the campaign poster

- Campaign for OHS recognition as an ILO fundamental right – 75 joint declarations in Latin America and the Caribbean.



• Courses



- **ILO Turin Fundamental Rights**
– Two courses were offered with scholarships granted by BWI:
“Digitalization of the Workplace and Digital Platforms” as well as “Fair Transition and Green Jobs”



- **Digital Activism** – in Portuguese and Spanish



- **Training Program on OHS Brigades**



- **Global Organizing Academy**



- **Regional Youth Academy**



- **Women Trade Union Leadership Program**



- **Environment and Climate Change**



- **Migrant Woman Workers, Colombia** – AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, United States



- **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Companies**



THE WORLD BANK

- **International Financial Institutions**

• Publications

- **BWI in Action Newsletter** –2020 Highlights and Leaders of Latin American and the Caribbean in Global Working Groups (WGs)
- **Guide on How to Integrate Informal Workers into Unions**
- **Union Network Newsletters**
- **Newsletter on OHS**
- **Newsletter on Migration** – Regional Trade Union Network on Migration



• Political Impact



Pedro Castillo,
elected President in Peru

The promotion of debates to get affiliates involved in the election processes in Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico and Peru.





• Multinational Companies' Union Networks

Campaigns were led and meetings held with the following networks:

Duratex, Etex, Faber-Castell, LafargeHolcim, CRH, Staedtler, Argos Cimento, AkzoNobel, MRV, Knauf and Engie.

• Regional Leaders at the new Work Groups (WGs)

- **The Building Materials WG**, coordinated by Raimundo Suzart (the *Químicos ABC Trade Union*)

- **BWI's Sectors WG**, coordinated by Eduardo Armond (*Minas Gerais Heavy Construction Industry Workers Union*)

- **Regional Trade Union Network on Migration**, coordinated by Rafael Navarro Hernández (*UNATROPYT, Costa Rica*)



Formal Complaints and Campaigns



- **Defense of the Amazon:** BWI has created the Global Solidarity Network to support the Amazon and to promote FSC certification. It has also filed an international complaint against the actions of Brazil's former Minister of the Environment, who is currently under criminal investigation for international timber trafficking.

- **Study on the impacts of budgeting-cuts to the Casa Verde e Amarela Program – Brazil:**

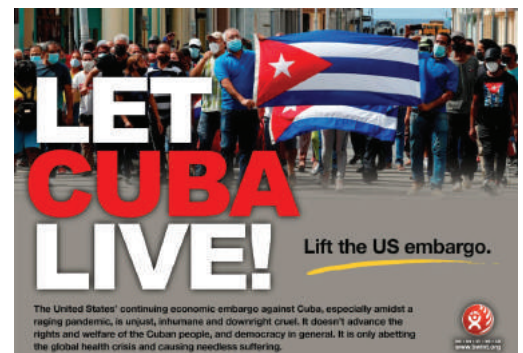
At BWI's request, Dieese (Brazil's Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies) has used the same methodology that was used in the recent study on the impacts of Lava Jato Operation to show that, on top of the 2 million Reais cut from the government, there are also millions of Reais in losses due to the impact on the country's production chain and overall development.



- **Timber companies in Paraná:**

BWI and FETRACONSPAR have filed a formal complaint at the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) against several companies in the state of Paraná, southern Brazil, since they refused to sign the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and due to unfair competition.

- **Solidarity with Cuba:** BWI joined the international trade union movement and launched a Solidarity Campaign for Cuba. It was led by the BWI Regional Office in Latin America and the Caribbean. The campaign began on social networks with affiliates and governments in the region and started to take shape after Biden's decision to maintain the embargo. In addition to providing support to Cuban union leaders and the workers who have been bearing the impacts of the immoral economic blockade, the campaign also involves concrete actions, as it sends medical supplies donated by people and organizations from around the world to Cuba.



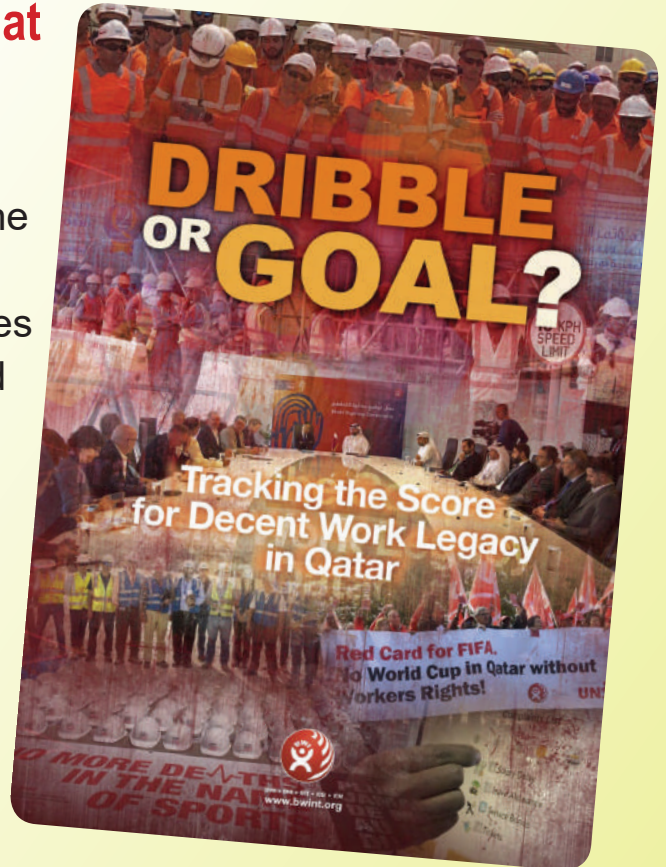
• Decent Working Condition Campaign at the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup

In July/2021, the report of BWI's successful **Campaign on Qatar 2022** was launched at the United Nation headquarters in Brussels, with the participation of athletes and representatives from the FIFA Human Rights Commission and the International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPRO).

Started in 2018, the Campaign achieved a major reduction in the number of work-related accidents at building sites, but also led to the abolishment of what is known as the kafala system - which withheld migrant workers' passports – which is a form of modern slavery.

Additionally, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) inspections were carried out at building sites by BWI affiliates from other countries.

As a continuation of the Campaigns on sport events, BWI has already started working to guarantee decent working conditions in construction projects of the 2026 World Cup FIFA games in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.



We want to show our appreciation for international union collaboration

In short, we have:

- More than **30,000** new union members (3,200 of whom are women, equaling 11%)
- **180** activities developed between 2018 and 2020
- **14,600** participants, **2,500** of whom were women (17%)
- **280** regional posts between 2019 and 2021 (on Facebook, Twitter and on our website), reaching an audience of over **200,000** people

This has only been possible with the solidarity and support of international organizations

It is important for affiliates to know that statutory affiliation fees are a fundamental resource for maintaining and fostering BWI's actions in making trade unions stronger, but that they are not enough to cover the costs of all the activities that have been described in this newsletter, for example.

This work is only possible through the powerful and unified support of affiliate organizations in industrialized countries that obtain resources from the governments of their countries to contribute to the union movement around the world through institutions such as those listed below.

International assistance is not granted overnight, and our staff often needs to work hard for many years before ultimately being able to implement a project in partnership with these organizations. And once the project has begun, they need time to manage it responsibly and with accountability, as the requirements are increasingly demanding.

For these reasons and more, we would like to express our gratitude to:



FES – Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, Germany



U2U – Union to Union, Sweden



FNV – The Netherlands Trade Union Confederation



AFL-CIO USA



DGB – The German Trade Union Confederation



FOS Belgium



TUC – Trades Union Congress, United Kingdom

BWI in Action Bulletin

October/2021

2020/2021 Regional Report

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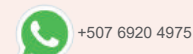
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BWI • Building and Wood Worker's International
BHI • Bau-und Holzarbeiter Internationale
BTI • Byggnads-ogh Träarbetar-Internationalen
IBB • Internationale des travailleurs du bâtiment et du bois
ICM • Internacional de Trabajadores de la Construcción y la Madera



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