

*Inter Pares strengthens social movements by connecting people and struggles at home and abroad. Guided by feminist principles of equality and solidarity, we are a small team, raising money, offering organizational support, and engaging the public and decision-makers to change laws and policies that privilege the powerful few.*

*In 2012, Inter Pares contributed more than \$4.9 million in financial support to our counterparts in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Canada. Our relationship with each counterpart is unique, adapted to the needs of each organization and our work together. Counterparts contribute significantly to our understanding of issues, to our work in policy advocacy, and to building our programs.*

*For more photos, stories, and information visit [www.interpares.ca](http://www.interpares.ca).*



Diego, José and Juan Luis, three community organizers from Latin America working on migrant workers' rights, came to Canada in October.

Canada increasingly relies on temporary migrant workers in many sectors of the economy. Yet the legal frameworks for migrant worker programs, and the absence of effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, make the workers vulnerable to abuse. In February 2012, Project Counselling Service (PCS) organized the first Mesoamerican conference focusing on temporary migrant worker programs, bringing together over 140 participants from labour, human rights, and social justice organizations from six countries. A key

## Latin America

component was hearing the first-hand accounts of migrant workers themselves. Story after story revealed widespread abuse by recruiting agencies in home countries that demand exorbitant and illegal fees, as well as the exposure of workers to exploitative working conditions in Canada and elsewhere. As a follow-up, in October 2012, Inter Pares and PCS organized a tour to Canada of three community organizers at the forefront of the struggles for migrant workers' rights in Guatemala. Among these was José Sicajau, President of the Association of Guatemalans United for our Rights (AGUND), a grassroots organization formed by 60 former migrant workers who were blacklisted for denouncing abuses.

Several years ago in Peru, facing a government that refused to investigate countless disappearances during the armed conflict, the Association of Family Members of People Detained,

Disappeared or Assassinated in Huancavelica (ADFADA) decided to take matters into its own hands. In collaboration with Huancavelica's Attorney General for Human Rights, and with support from Inter Pares and Project Counselling Service (PCS), ADFADA searched Peru's mountainous regions for mass graves, focusing on areas near former military bases and questioning local residents. In June, two such sites were uncovered and ten bodies exhumed by the Attorney General's office. Two bodies were identified as the remains of loved ones of ADFADA members. As painful as this process is, these results have encouraged ADFADA to continue its search so that other families can find some closure and bury their dead with love and respect. Moreover, with the recovery of these bodies, the Attorney General can now open a legal case to identify their murderers, a further step towards achieving justice.



Research workshop on "landgrabs", Guinea-Bissau.

Foreign investors, including Canadian companies, are acquiring large tracts of land in the global South, often leased for 99 years, in order to produce food crops and agrofuels for export. Despite the chronic hunger suffered by people in Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 70% of such massive land acquisitions in the world take place there. These land acquisitions, more commonly known as "landgrabs", are often veiled in secrecy; those most affected, small farmers and pastoralists, are often not informed until the day the bulldozers arrive and

## Africa

they are forced to leave. In March, Inter Pares was awarded a three-year grant from the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to better understand the process and the impacts of large-scale land acquisitions in West Africa. The action-research project is a collaboration among the Université de Montréal, Inter Pares, and our counterpart COPAGEN, a West African coalition dedicated to protecting and promoting biodiverse small-scale agriculture. The research is being carried out by farm leaders and citizen groups in nine countries in West Africa, and will give farmers and pastoralists better tools to defend their land and livelihoods.

In April, Inter Pares hosted two representatives of the Sudanese Organization for Research and Development (SORD). While in Ottawa they spoke with parliamentarians about the

human rights situation facing women and youth in Sudan, and strengthened links with Canadian civil society groups. Asha El-Karib, SORD's Executive Director, met with the Sudanese community in Ottawa as well as organizations in Ottawa and Toronto that address violence against women. Her visit forged stronger connections as each side shared their perspectives and strategies for overcoming common obstacles. For Mohamed Abdelgader, coordinator of the Youth Forum at SORD, the visit was an important learning experience: meeting with young Canadian activists, listening to their concerns and challenges, and talking about the struggles of Sudanese youth. Mohamed returned to Sudan energized and full of ideas for new activities to build on the Youth Forum's successful training and empowerment of youth leaders from across ethnic lines.

## Asia



Newborn being registered at the Mae Tao Clinic.

The Mae Tao Clinic (MTC) is a long-term Inter Pares counterpart in Mae Sot, Thailand, providing health care to people from Burma in response to ongoing conflict and forced displacement, and the absence of any services from Burmese authorities. Last year, MTC and its satellite clinics treated over 140,000 cases, with malaria, one of Burma's leading causes of death, being the most prevalent and significant illness treated. Approximately 70% of all malaria cases at the clinic in Thailand are patients who have crossed the border from Burma. Over the past two years, there has been a significant decrease in malaria cases, partly a result of efforts by Inter Pares counterparts working in the border region. Another great outcome is the number of babies delivered at MTC last year – over 3,000, an average of 7 births a day. MTC issues a delivery certificate for babies born at the clinic, and children born outside of the clinic may also be documented through a partner program. Birth registration is crucial in addressing the

serious complications for stateless children, and now, thanks to MTC's registration programs, nearly 100% of new babies are issued a certificate.

In Bangladesh, Nijera Kori supported landless peasants to collect information on the implementation of a government employment program for the poor. A door-to-door survey was conducted by members to verify whether the government-provided information, obtained through the Right to Information law, was accurate. They found numerous cases of corruption when they compared local officials' claims to the experiences of program beneficiaries. In response, Nijera Kori convened a public tribunal, attended by 3,000 people, where the poor presented their evidence, and local officials were invited to explain their actions in a process of public accountability. The tribunal achieved national media attention, and the private bank responsible for the administration of the program agreed to make changes in how future programs are run to eliminate corruption. The national government launched an investigation and agreed to include representatives of the landless poor in the management committee of future programs.

In January, Inter Pares convened an exciting South-South exchange in India,

which brought activists from Canada, India, Bangladesh, Burma, and the Philippines together with West African activists from Benin, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire. They shared their experiences working with small farmers to promote ecological agriculture, to publicize the dangers of genetically engineered (GE) crops, and to critique corporate control over agriculture. This very successful exchange resulted in many new initiatives and concrete actions, such as the decision to form a millet network in West Africa. The Coalition for the Protection of African Genetic Heritage (COPAGEN) in West Africa and the Deccan Development Society from India will collaborate in expanding the promotion of biodiverse millet production in West Africa, and expand joint work on GE cotton. The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association decided to include the issue of the introduction of GE crops in its program, and will bring colleagues from Third World Network in the Philippines to Dhaka to build the capacity of Bangladeshi organizations on the issue. Burmese organizations, where most recent struggles have focused on survival and human rights, saw what happens when corporations take control over agriculture out of the hands of farmers – and are beginning preparations to ensure that a similar situation doesn't arise in Burma.



Doctors protesting against refugee health cuts.

Holocaust survivor and activist Elie Wiesel recently stated, "Today, as yesterday, a nation is judged by its attitude towards refugees." He was lending his voice in solidarity to the protest against cuts to Canada's Interim Federal Health Program. These cuts deny many refugees, who are escaping persecution and war, basic health care – something that dates back to the provision of healthcare for refugees following World War II. Inter Pares' counterpart, the Canadian Health Coalition (CHC), views these cuts as

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the federal government reneging on its responsibility to protect the universality of health care in Canada, as well as a threat to public health. CHC supports the campaign to reverse these cuts. By providing information and strategic support to a grassroots movement of doctors and other activists, CHC instigated key actions to raise awareness about this issue, including participating in a successful National Day of Action.

Over the past year Inter Pares played a crucial role in strengthening Food Secure Canada (FSC) as a solid voice on food security issues and as an advocate for changes to Canada's food system. Investing funds and staff time, Inter Pares helped build it from a small group of dedicated volunteers to a strong national organization with a staff of five. In April, on the

anniversary of the launch of the Peoples' Food Policy, FSC helped convene meetings across the country between civil society and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. FSC used this high-profile visit to shed light on the increased incidence of hunger in Canada, particularly in the North, and the need for a comprehensive national food policy based on the needs of all people.

On a more specific issue, in view of the growing evidence of problems associated with genetically modified organisms (GMOs), the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), an Inter Pares counterpart, continued campaigns for phasing out of GMOs. Over the past year, CBAN coordinated a successful campaign to abandon the marketing of a genetically engineered pig known as *Enviropig*.

Inter Pares' work is made possible by thousands of supporters across Canada, and by contributions from the Canadian government through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Inter Pares is deeply grateful for this trust and support.

221 Laurier Avenue East, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6P1  
Charitable registration number (BN) 11897 1100 RR000 1

Phone: 613 563-4801 or 1-866 563-4801 (toll free)  
Fax: 613 594-4704 | info@interpares.ca | www.interpares.ca