

ACORN International Board Meeting

May 16th 2020 – 10.30 EST - 12.20 EST

Attendance: On the zoom (30): All countries represented (either connected or tried to connect) except Peru. [Czech Republic time difference. Honduras, internet connection issues.] Attendance list attached.

Marva Burnett, ACORN International President opened the meeting with a welcome and a request for an update from all in attendance.

Canada: 140k members with major campaigns: Rent Break, Rent Freeze, Rent Control, Eviction protection and prevention program, Internet for All, Fair Banking

England: (Tom) Focused on community response, 2000 members delivering food, medication, essential tasks, Members in 19 towns and cities across the country. 6% increase in membership during shutdown. Focus on renters, and people falling through the cracks. Launched a petition 40k signatures. Expand eviction ban, "HOUSING is Health"! End to section 21 (what is used to evict with no reason). Rent Waiver! Government mandate to freeze mortgages. Global Demands: housing and essential services

India:

Bengaluru – (Suresh): workers – we have formed a union of street vendors and other informal workers. Migrant workers are stranded without food. About 700 migrant workers, we provided food for 20 days for these workers. 5200 everyday – construction workers and street workers. We are now organizing and registering a union in Bengaluru for construction workers.

Delhi – (Dharmendra): members are homeless workers, rag pickers, home based work, domestic work, no work for many workers, means no food, member have no life line – we are feeding 7000 a day in our migrant overnight shelters Demand cash into peoples' accounts – basic food for everyone, housing for migrant workers, We are also distributing food and protective gear.

Mumbai – (Vinod): we work in Dharavi – half million people living there. A lot of workshops – commercial workshops and residential workshops. Large parts are on containment – no one allowed to go in our out. No access to food or social service. Social distancing impossible. Paramilitary don't let people walk on the street, ACORN foundation has been distributing food – everyday, a food kit for family of 5. Cooked food sometimes. Volunteers are distributing food. Doing advocacy for migrant workers, government slowly responding

Cameroon: (Tatiane - national secretary of Cameroon ACORN – many members are unemployed, laid off, hours reduced. Campaigned to access water – because public works delayed – we pushed the company who does this to keep working despite the

crisis. Reduction of revenues. We did a survey and met public officials to get solution, we intend to organize online – many crisis at the same time.

France: (Fatiha) - in Grenoble south of France – we are a green zone , better then rest of France. Paris and Lyon, 13 chapters, big families. We had local election – lock down ended just this week – many died – elderly people effected, members living in elderly housing loss of revenue - big families cannot pay rent because of loss of revenue, people choosing between food and rent, hundreds of members didn't pay rent. Schools have been closed, demanding cancelation of the debts – total or reduction in social housing. – meeting elected officials about this, with other organizations, we launched a public call with 100 members – in Paris we got a commitment for 200 tenants, no win in Grenoble or Lyon yet – fighting for no eviction. Call from 100 families - got good attention. Proposed an international call for 1000 families from around the world.

Ireland: (Rory - from CATU) – we are small, just started 10 months ago – we launched a branch. Online launch due to covid – membership defense – trainings – reaching out to grassroots groups or former partners. Asking them to join a committee to organize. Launched in two communities that will launch when this is over. Campaign around high rents in their neighborhoods. Just passed our first 100 members. Maybe hire a paid trainer to do political education and courses.

Italy: (David) – we have one chapter doing legal work, .. things have been bumpy ... one great thing is training to students – now Covid – many people have lost their jobs. About 30% have been effected. People are stuck, they have no money. Story of David the landlord.

Honduras: (Marian video) (Marcos) – Hard hit with the curfews. Campaigns to get electricity and water to neighborhoods, some support to single mothers, Major issue now with COVID is access to food. Only leave you house 1 every 10 days, no subsidies so – gov trying to distribute food to neighborhoods that support the current government. They have been focused on getting the gov to do more in all neighborhoods. And delivering food themselves. Small enterprises – masks for sale – to help get supplies to members, other ways to get food. Food growing projects, any other way to get food into the neighborhoods.

Peru – (Wade) (No Call) food distribution and health, Lima is dire.

Kenya – (Sammy) biggest 2 campaigns one on education, other campaign is water and sewer access. so far in partial lockdown – difficult for people of Korogochu –suffering is great – gov has promised to support community by giving out money – but has led to corruption – many people have not gotten.

Liberia – (David): leader working in 2 plantations – over 500 members – we just started 2 years- Liberia company around the plantations. Issue with COVID: members are desperate, nothing, we are in a lockdown for 2 months, people laid off – 3pm curfew –

gov announced food support in response from business owners, 2 months announcements – very difficult – what we have done – not much due to lock down.

Scotland: (Sonja) -- Regular online national online forums – we launched a survey – 800 responses. People are worried about debt. We have developed member defense volunteers. We have won some rent reductions. Our membership has grown – 230 members. 1067 members in total. Moving from reacting to acting. Campaign around evictions and hygiene. Making sure government cleaning in tower blocks. Developing UK wide demands with England. How to we bring into our neighborhoods is a priority.

USA:

Louisiana: (Richard) -- 9000 members NOLA – blighted lot campaign – making rain gardens - with covid – lots of people behind in their rent, extend past june 1 - fighting people to help pay back rent, Food pantry campaign – getting food out to seniors and kids who are out of school. After Katrina – bring out the census – don't have people on the ground but people doing training on the phone to get people into the census. Goal of 80% bring us back on the MAP. Up from 32% - other groups helping, we are leading the committee. Working with council woman. Debra Campbell – call with council to brainstorm what people can do for help. 50 people on the phone every Thursday - help for food and utilities, stopping illegal elections. Lead campaigns - campaign to get rid of the lead sewer lines and water lines. Make sure the schools have the filter. Working with Lake Charles. Fight for No evictions.

Local 100 – Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas (Henrietta) The COVID – distributing 7000 masks. Some workers getting extra hazard pay. Innovative ways to get new members. Public employees still getting paid if they are working or not. Working with nursing homes. Which were hit hard. 25 employees tested positive. Working to get hazard pay. Fighting for free food for kids out of school. Fighting to get masks for employees –workers afraid to home and infect families. Prison population has exploded – guards required to work even if they test positive. Fighting against that. Fighting to keep people safe. Ban evictions for tenants.

ACORN International Website: (Maggie) – Template for new website demonstrated for the board. June 18th 2020 – 50th anniversary will be full launch. Need stories and pictures.

50th anniversary – Other events in planning.

International Tenant Union – ACORN has applied to be a member. 50 euros a year. Their board is discussing.

Next Meeting

- In the fall or late summer.

Closing – Appreciation for everyone’s participation and best wishes for good health and great victories in organizing.

AGENDA

ACORN International Board Meeting

Zoom Call

Saturday, May 16, 2020

8:30 (Honduras), 930 (New Orleans & Peru), 1030 (Toronto), 330 PM (Ireland, England, Cameroon, & Tunisia), 430 PM (France, Italy, Czech Republic), 530 PM (Kenya), 8PM (India)

1. Welcome by ACORN International President Marva Burnett (ACORN Canada)
2. Country Reports
 - Update on Covid-19 work and impact of the corona-virus on your members
 - Brief remarks on your major campaign
 - Comments on global demands on housing, internet access, and other ACORN International campaigns.
 - Order of Reports:
 - First group:
 - Canada
 - England
 - India
 - Second group (French translation)

- Cameroon
 - France
 - Tunisia
 - Third group
 - India
 - Ireland
 - Italy
 - Fourth group (Spanish translation)
 - Honduras
 - Peru
 - Fifth group
 - Kenya
 - Liberia
 - Scotland
 - United States of America
3. Review work on the new website and 50th anniversary – Maggie Calmes
 4. Report on International Union of Tenants
 5. Schedule for next meeting.

Zoom Coordinates

For computers/smartphones: <https://zoom.us/j/93165092547>

To call in dial: 855 703 8985 and Meeting ID press 931 6509 2547 followed by #

If you need translation, call in 30-minutes ahead of time!!

