



Annual Report/Rapport annuel 2019-2020

Local 76000 IDRC/Section locale 76000 CRDI

November 2020

Prepared for the 4th AGM by: Sean Burns, Avi Caplan, Anne-Sophie Drouin, Erin Gilmore, Michele Leone, Zee Leung and David O'Brien

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear colleagues,

Due to the pandemic and uncertainty about when and how to convene our Annual General Meeting, we are late in holding our AGM and sharing this report with you. With PSAC's guidance, we are holding a virtual AGM. I am looking forward to our AGM, discussing our journey outlined in this report, hearing from you and renewing the Local executive and stewards.

As we approach our 4th AGM, we do so on a positive note. It has been a period of transition, progress and a few challenges. Several Local executive members were unable to serve their full terms and we said goodbye to our past-president, Andrés Sánchez, who led and mentored us through the formative years of our movement. We benefited from his intellect and diplomacy which was instrumental in setting the groundwork for the recognition and respect we now have. I could not be doing this job without his mentorship and the support of the Local executive and stewards.

In terms of progress, some changes are more quantifiable than others though I feel there has been progress across the board. We have grown our presence by increasing the number of Local representatives participating in the Mental Health Working Group and the Health and Safety Committees. I am also pleased that two Local representatives are involved in the Diversity and Inclusivity Committee. These committees are arguably dealing with the most challenging issues that any workforce, unionized or not, face today. Our members care deeply about these issues and it is important to contribute to Centre-wide discussions through the lens of our Collective Agreement and the values that inform it.

We have worked very hard this year on representing members in the grievance process. We have resolved 30 of 39 outstanding grievances and three of the remaining grievances are due for mediation before our AGM. I am confident they will be resolved as well. Some of these issues have been with us for years and represent weeks of work by Local representatives and PSAC staff.

Harder to measure is our investment in building constructive relations with Centre management. The relationship between the Local and Centre management has matured into one where we consult and collaborate often. When we meet, we have productive, forward-oriented discussions. I hope to keep us moving in this direction.

Our to-do list will always have recurring tasks but in this coming year, I see a few key areas of focus. A key one is to form a bargaining team who will forge a new collective agreement. We will reach out to all of you to inform our priorities for the next round of bargaining. I am also conscious that the pandemic has disrupted our lives and we want to be there to support your well-being. We continue to advocate for and represent members who have questions and concerns with teleworking, balancing work, and office closer and relocation.

The Local continues to grapple with workload. While the Local must maintain its focus in understanding and quickly responding to the issues that face us, we must also work on better articulating our longer-term vision and goals and mobilizing our membership to work towards those goals together. The solution to this is simple; we need more volunteers.

Look forward to working with you.

Sean Burns
President, Executive Committee

1 PROGRESS REPORT ON 2019 PRIORITIES

The main work of the Local executive and volunteers involves representing members and improving dialogue with IDRC management to improve work conditions and uphold the Collective Agreement.

At our 2019 Annual General Meeting, we passed two motions and the executive committee announced several complementary priorities for the year. The executive's overall assessment of progress is summarized below.

Priority	Areas of progress / lack of progress
Representing members	<p>Progress made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought to a conclusion 30 of 39 outstanding grievances. • Committees created by the Collective Agreement to promote dialogue are functional and these have improved understanding on a wide range of issues. <p>More attention needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase support from steward network
Implement 2019 AGM Motions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regional office stewards b. Communications officer 	<p>Progress made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruited an interim Communications Officer <p>More attention needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold elections for stewards in regional offices and provide training for volunteers.
Improve dialogue between HR and regional offices members	<p>Progress made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertook review of employment-related issues of staff moving to and working in regional offices and discussed findings with management • Undertook dialogue with HR to minimize disruption due to Covid-related relocations and suspension of Home Leave <p>More attention needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult more frequently with regional office staff to exchange information and monitor unresolved issues (e.g., issues related to health insurance and parental leave)

Increase the number of stewards to replace those who have left	<p>No progress</p> <p>More attention needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steward numbers have declined. Responsibility for helping colleagues seeking help and guidance is falling on too few people.
Completing the transition to the new case management system	<p>Progress made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced SharePoint <p>More attention needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine the system to make it accessible, user-friendly and eliminate data duplication.
Creating a standing communications team that will take responsibility for our website, email distribution and translation.	<p>Progress made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim Communications Officer selected from volunteer candidates in December 2019 22 communiqués sent to members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 between Mar 8 and Dec 3, 2019 15 between Jan 1 and Oct 26, 2020 <p>More attention needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaunch and update the website (https://local76000.ca/)

2 OUR MEMBERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE

The following table summarizes the size of our membership at the time of our AGMs.

Event	Date	Total Membership*
Union Certification	26-11-2015	243 (eligible to vote)
Special Assembly to elect Executive & Bargaining Team	18-02-2016	243
First AGM	03-03-2017	255
Second AGM	01-03-2018	251
Third AGM	07-03-2019	230
Fourth AGM	31-10-2020	207

* Total membership includes all members including those on leave without pay and other leave.

It is important to note that membership numbers change through the year but as the table shows, our membership has declined every AGM. We are aware of and concerned about our shrinking numbers. Restructuring, contracting out, the precarious nature of employment associated with externally-funded programs are some of the reasons behind the declining membership.

The Local executive is made up of volunteers who serve two-year terms. Any member of the Local is invited to stand for election at annual AGMs. We encourage all of you to consider volunteering your time to support your colleagues.

The following candidates were elected to the Local Executive at the 2019 AGM for a two-year term.

President: Sean Burns

Chief Steward: Paul Viveiros (currently on leave)

Secretary-Treasurer: Erin Gilmore

Human Rights Officer: Zee Leung

The following executive committee members continued to serve and are up for election at the 2020 AGM.

Vice-President Regional Offices: Michele Leone (2018-2020)

Vice-President: David O'Brien (2018-2020)

Health and Safety Officer: Carole Garneau (2018-2020, left IDRC in 2019) Avi Caplan serving in interim capacity since March 2020

Communications Officer: Anne-Sophie Drouin (Dec. 2019- Nov. 2020)

The 2019 AGM created the position of Communications Officer. Anne-Sophie Drouin is serving in an interim capacity.

3 THE LOCAL'S WORK: ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the Local are to:

1. Work with IDRC's management to ensure fair and equitable treatment of employees.
2. Represent staff coming under the Local's jurisdiction in matters of conditions of employment.

WORK WITH IDRC'S MANAGEMENT TO ENSURE FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF EMPLOYEES

Our Collective Agreement established one standing and one ad hoc committee to open dialogue with management. In addition, the President and Chief Steward communicate regularly with Human Resources colleagues to discuss the interpretation and implementation of the Collective Agreement.

The Joint Union Management Coordination Committee (JUMCC)

Established by Article 61 of the Collective Agreement, this standing committee is co-chaired by Sean Burns and Andrée Leduc. The Local is represented by David O'Brien and Michele Leone. Centre management is represented by Patricia Corrigan and Denis Trudeau.

The Terms of Reference, meeting agendas and minutes will be stored in a newly created site: <https://oidrc.sharepoint.com/sites/int-grp-jumcc>

This Committee serves as the forum to discuss the interpretation and implementation of the Collective Agreement and compatibility with existing and proposed management policies and processes.

To illustrate one topic of conversation this year, the Local executive prepared a report on job relocation and issues arising. Members of the Local had communicated to the executive and stewards challenges they experienced during their relocations. Issues relating to settling in, such as visas, taxation, family travel and education have negatively impacted employees and some cases have resulted in grievances and members leaving the Centre. Management welcomed the report and identified plans to bring a more coordinated approach to relocation. Some of the identified challenges re-emerged when regional offices were closed due to COVID and some staff were relocated. Future JUMCC meetings will revisit this topic.

Meetings of the JUMCC were temporarily halted during a period of intensive consultation on the Centre's restructuring plans. The duty to consult is an obligation of management under the Collective Agreement. The numerous presentations by management and invitation to comment was appreciated by both sides. Now that this consultation is over, JUMCC meeting will resume.

Letter of Understanding

As part of the Collective Agreement, the Union and IDRC management agreed to strike an ad hoc 'Letter of Understanding' committee to enhance transparency, public confidence and integrity in relation to programming.

This Committee is co-chaired by David O'Brien and Federico Burone. Local representatives are Marie-Gloriose Ingabire, Michele Leone and Adrian Di Giovanni. Management is represented by Katrina Millard and Santiago Alba Corral.

The Committee met three times to discuss two discussion papers prepared by the Local. The first paper focused on recognizing authorship and the publication policy. The Local proposed changes to the Centre's publication policy to bring it in line with practices and procedures in place at similar organizations. The Local raised the issue that program staff are not uniformly and adequately recognized for their contribution to Centre publications, internal reports and external publications and presentations.

The second paper focused on the procedures and practices that uphold the principles of transparency, objectivity and impartiality in our grant-making, and circumstances where unionized employees see scope for improving our current guidance and practice. These conversations are ongoing and we have invited management to explore with us changes to the management policy manual and procedures that guide grant-making.

Human Rights in the workplace

The Local continues to work towards promoting a safe, inclusive and equitable workplace. For this past year, a major focus was on protecting and supporting the psychosocial health and safety of our members in light of documented staff experiences of racism, sexism and discrimination in the workplace. The Local worked with Centre management to develop and implement strategies and resources to promote a safe and respectful work environment.

Much of this work was advanced through the Local Human Rights Officer's participation in the Centre's Gender, Inclusion and Diversity Working Group, where input was provided to several Centre-wide activities including the design, roll-out, and dissemination of a diversity and inclusion survey (which was led by the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion). Support was also provided to the development of a roadmap to identify and undertake priority actions informed by the results of that diversity and inclusion survey.

The Local also participates in meetings of the Racially Visible Action Committee (RVAC) of PSAC, in order to better understand and support PSAC in combatting systemic racism and discrimination across the Government of Canada, other PSAC member organizations, as well as within PSAC itself.

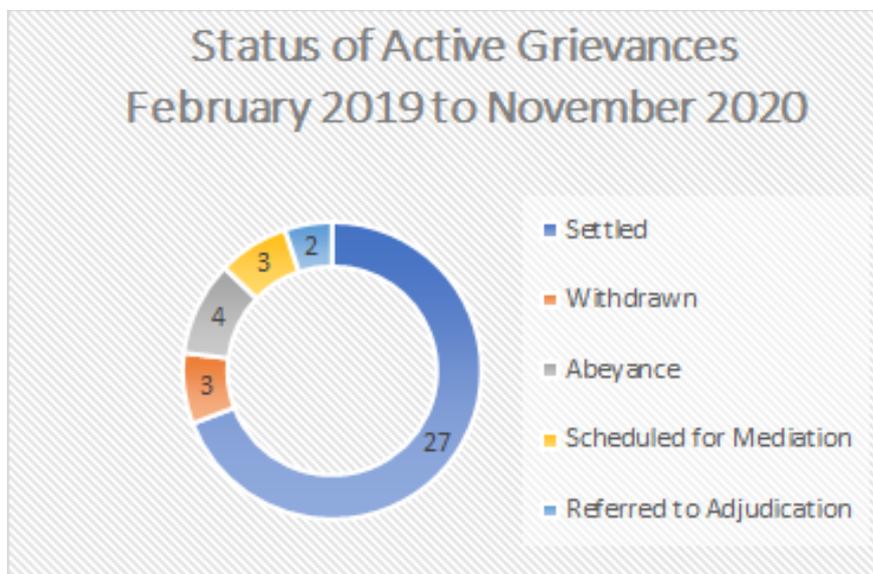
REPRESENT STAFF COMING UNDER THE LOCAL’S JURISDICTION IN MATTERS OF CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

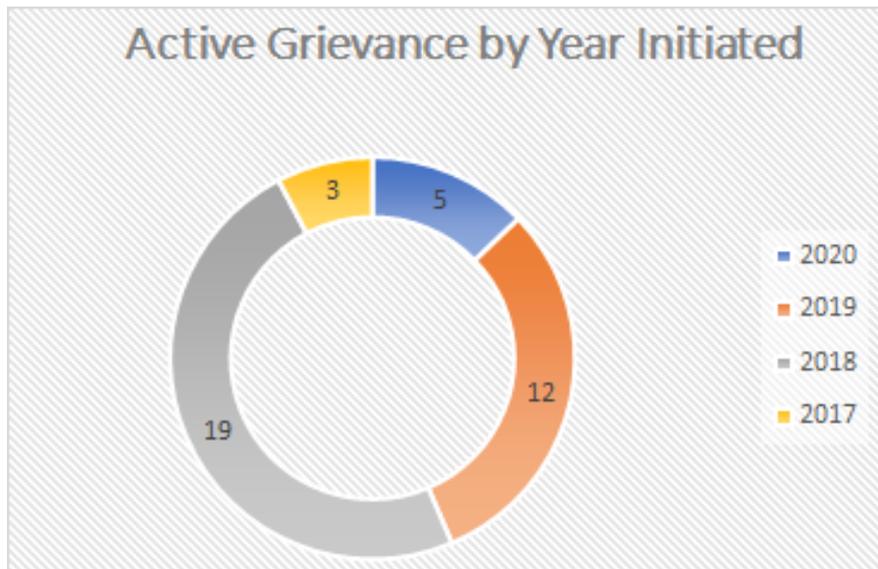
The Stewards Network

Stewards of the Local serve a critical role in supporting members. We had planned to increase our numbers this year to make it easier for members to reach out for information and guidance. Unfortunately, our elected Chief Steward took leave and the Local did not follow through on the motion to elect stewards in each regional office. Belatedly, elections will be held during the 2020 AGM.

That said, the stewards made great strides this year to bring to a close 30 of the 39 active grievances. As a point of comparison, in our 2019 Report we reported that we were only able to resolve 5 grievances.

The two charts below indicate the grievances that have been acted upon between February 2019 – November 2020 and the number of grievances initiated per year.





The grievance process is confidential and as such, details of individual cases are not disclosed. That said, members have sought guidance from stewards and PSAC on a wide range of issues such as duty to accommodate under the Canadian Human Rights Act, Violence in the Workplace under the Canada Labour Code, overseas benefits and taxes, job descriptions and classification, secondments, and fairness of disciplinary action. The chart below breaks down grievances by category.



Stewards perform such an important function for those affected and we greatly appreciate the contribution of our volunteers to supporting their colleagues.

Communications

Follow AGM 2019, we acted on your suggestion to increase communication. Anne-Sophie Drouin volunteered to be the interim Communication Officer. Updates to members increased and she helped organize members meetings on topics of interest. Last year we held open meetings to exchange views on such topics as the new performance review process, work conditions in regional offices, the impact of re-organization and experience with authorship and how to improve transparency and integrity in programming.

Engaging colleagues in regional offices

The VP regional offices maintained a dialogue with members in the regions to discuss workplace issues which are specific to regional offices and to promote a common interpretation of the Collective Agreement across regions and between regions and HQs. Moreover, regional office staff have to navigate the impact of different legislation on the application of the Collective Agreement.

There remains a need for regular communication and to monitor progress on identified challenges (e.g., workplace air quality, relocation and the impact on pensions and taxation obligations, home travel benefits, parental leave, office closures during the COVID-19 pandemic). In addition to consulting with members, the VP regions reached out to new Regional Directors to ensure they understood the roles of the Union and elected members.

A link between members in the region and the stewards' network was also maintained. The Local organized a meeting of all regional office members in March 2019 on the sidelines of all program staff meeting. Several issues of concern were discussed including health insurance; pay slips and lack of clarity on taxable income status. This consultation also identified the strengths and weaknesses of the relocation process and impact on employees. The executive invited more detailed examples and Michele Leone presented a report on relocation for discussion at the Joint Union Management Coordination Committee.

Going forward, the proposal of a regional caucus will be pursued. The election of regional office stewards would help advance this proposal and improve representation.

Health and Safety

Health and Safety Committees: The Local is working to promote a healthy and safe working environment in Ottawa and in regional offices. This is principally done through the Health and Safety Policy Committee (HSPC) and the Workplace Health and Safety Committees (WHSCs). These committees identify and address health and safety issues in the workplace, and work to ensure that IDRC policies and practices comply with the Canada Labour Code Part II.

Teleworking and an eventual return to the office: The most significant health and safety issues this year have of course been related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Local and the Health and Safety Policy Committee have been and will continue to review teleworking conditions and plans to return to the office.

Over the last year, the Local has actively engaged with management, commented extensively on draft plans, and pushed the Centre to launch the recent organization-wide survey of staff and their thoughts, concerns and questions regarding a voluntary return to the office, and to openly share these results.

Drug and Alcohol Policy: In April 2019, following a revision to the Centre's Drug and Alcohol Policy, PSAC identified a number of provisions which appeared to impact the privacy rights and human rights of our members. A cease and desist letter from PSAC legal counsel was sent to the employer. The main concerns with this policy relate to its definition of safety-sensitive positions in the workplace, and the employer's expectation that employees must report any consumption of alcohol, cannabis or any other medication. We have been advised by PSAC that the proposed policy is not in line with current case law nor with guidance provided by the Canadian Human Rights Commission on this topic. Local is currently working with members of the Health and Safety Policy Committee to develop alternative text which would be agreeable to both the Union and the employer.

4 APPRECIATION OF SUPPORT

We continue to receive excellent guidance and advice from PSAC staff, who provided expert guidance on the restructuring, health and safety matters as well as essential support for the grievance and adjudication process.

Those who volunteered their time as executive members, stewards and those who contributed in other ways make the Collective Agreement meaningful for all of us in the bargaining unit. We are very grateful and thank all those who have volunteered.

5 PRIORITIES FOR 2020-21

One of the motions to be voted on at the 2020 AGM is the election of bargaining committee members. The Union will soon commence the bargaining process for our second collective agreement. The stewards and Local executive have been monitoring the implementation of our first agreement and we know what articles have been difficult to implement and interpret. We will look to add clarity to these and we will invest time in canvassing the views of all members to identify our priorities.

The dual impact of the pandemic and organizational restructuring has impacted our work and home lives. Supporting members through this period will continue to be an important focus next year.

The Local can only support our membership if there are volunteers willing to be there for colleagues in need and to uphold your Collective Agreement. We are grateful to all those who have volunteered and look to welcome new colleagues to become involved in the life of your Local!