

GMB**GMB@WORK**

The GMB International Solidarity Fund

GMB and Banana Link working together in solidarity

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

Many tropical fruit workers in Latin America live in poverty and their most basic rights fail to be respected in the workplace. The **GMB International Solidarity Fund** enables branches and regions to support directly the organising, legal and education work of Latin American agricultural trade unions. These unions need our solidarity to defend the rights of plantation workers and empower representatives to collectively bargain for Decent Work.

Freedom & Fairness for Fyffes Workers in Central America



A key focus of our work this year has been the launch of a global campaign calling on the multinational fruit giant Fyffes to address labour rights violations on their subsidiaries' plantations in Costa Rica and Honduras, including the right to join an independent trade union and for unions to engage in collective bargaining.

Banana Link and the GMB have been key partners in the campaign, which responded to reports of labour violations including the failure to pay minimum wages and social insurance; exposure of workers to hazardous agrochemicals; failure to respect freedom of association including threats, harassment and sacking of union members; and blocking collective bargaining processes.

The right to form trade unions and the right to organise to collectively bargain, protect workplace rights and improve working conditions, are key aspects of the global human right to Freedom of Association. Individual workers should be free to exercise their right to join a trade union, without action by employers to restrict that right, or to coerce workers to renounce their rights, as has been evidenced at Fyffes subsidiaries.

Fyffes was recently suspended from the Ethical Trading Initiative, and required to engage with the International Union of Foodworkers to establish a mutually agreeable framework for engagement with local trade unions in Honduras. We hope that Fyffes will introduce effective measures to ensure respect for the labour rights of all workers in its supply chains.



Making a real difference



Many of the gains made as a result of the **GMB International Solidarity Fund** are much smaller in scale to the campaign against Fyffes, but are nonetheless essential in enabling our partner trade unions to organise effectively in what is generally a hostile environment for trade unions. One such example is the funding this year of the purchase of a motorbike for the secretary of **SITRAP** in Costa Rica to help him with his organising work at more than 40 plantations.

In thanking GMB branches for their support, SITRAP General Secretary, Didier Leitón, said *"with the solidarity you have shown SITRAP in helping us to buy a motorcycle, we will continue the work of promoting the unionisation of workers in the banana and pineapple sectors. Our aim is to achieve a better standard of living for the working class, which*

produces so much wealth for transnationals, supermarkets and others, but in many cases lives in extreme poverty".

Sign up and help us to achieve more Funds raised so far have provided crucial capacity building but more is needed to help our union brothers and sisters in their struggle. Please fill in and post the slip below. For more info: email: info@bananalink.org.uk or visit: www.bananalink.org.uk/gmb-international-solidarity-fund

We would like to support the **GMB International Solidarity Fund** with the following amount (suggested minimum donation £8.25 per month or £100 per year).

£ Monthly donation Annual donation

Contact Name

Branch

Address

Email
(please write clearly)

I enclose a cheque payable to 'GMB International Solidarity Fund'

Please send me a standing order form

Post to Bert Schouwenburg, GMB Freepost (WC2268) London SW19 4YY

You can also donate by BACS transfer: bank Unity Trust Bank Plc, account name GMB International Solidarity Fund, account no 20271437, sort code 08-60-01